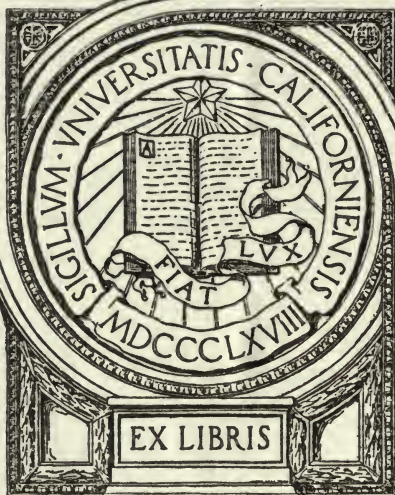


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GIFT OF
Professor G.R. Noyes



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STUDIES IN CRITICISM



BY

FLORENCE TRAIL

“I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.”

Milton's Areopagitica, II, 411—12.

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1888

GIFT OF
Professor G. R. Noyes

To
MARY R. MINES, ELIZABETH W. MINES,
NETTIE B. WALLACE & ALICE CONKLIN,

Whose disinterested love
has been the solace
of my life,

I DEDICATE
THIS ATTEMPT TO REALIZE BUT ONE
OF THE GENEROUS ASPIRATIONS
THEY HAVE CHERISHED
FOR ME.

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STUDIES IN CRITICISM.

“POOLS FILLED WITH WATER.”

“WHAT is the hardest task in the world?” asks Emerson.

“To think,” is the prompt, laconic reply.

But that which demands our best energies and greatest abilities must be well worth doing, a right noble undertaking?

It is more. The task which is the hardest presses upon us with the greatest weight of obligation.

Look the truth unflinchingly in the face: the fact that any task is hard is the very reason we dare not shirk it: the little loophole that it might be shirked because it is hard lets in the one ray of daylight whereby we see and recognize the subterfuge. The more the sluggish nature shrinks from exertion, the more does the awakened conscience enforce the duty of exertion. Let the moral conviction only be genuine, and the inferior nature will inevitably be carried farther than the superior one; by the very

weight of the pressure which the new force must exert to displace the old.

I have chosen as the title of this special Essay, and as that which shall throw a direct influence upon those following it, a clause in our English Psalter which always plunges me into a profound reverie, so much the more wonderfully full of meaning does it appear the oftener the familiar words fall on my ear.

The officiating clergyman reads :

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee ;
in whose heart are Thy ways.”

And the people respond : (implying Blessed are they)

“Who going through the vale of misery use it for
a well : and the pools are filled with water.”

The language, forcible in its primary meaning chiefly to those living in Eastern countries, conveying in its comprehensiveness a vivid idea of all that is involved in the refreshment and invigoration of water to the thirsty, weary traveller of those lands, is full of a grand typical significance for the thoughtful of all ages and all lands. As there are few wells, and as little rain falls in those countries, the traveller must meet with repeated disappointments, the bitterest being that of finding wells without water :—of seeing his hopes dashed to the ground just as every indication promises their realization.

The inspired writer declares that the man whose

strength is in God, in whose heart the laws and commandments of God are treasured, may regard everything that enters into the course of his earthly pilgrimage as a means of animation and invigoration : and adds, with an emphasis which cannot be misunderstood, that the special sources from which such a man has a right to look for refreshment and enjoyment *are* filled with satisfying and delightful effluences.

Few pursuits have been more derided than that of Metaphysical study. I do not intend to put in any plea for it. Let those who can, face the frightful irony in the idea that we get the least out of that from which we have a right to expect the most. The danger of thinking is, of course, only exceeded by one other danger—that of not thinking, the consequences of which all, alike, wish to be excused from contemplating. But of the many grand and glorious sources of enjoyment which we come upon in our journey through life, many will agree with me that the most lasting, unfailing and reliable are intellectual enjoyments, and that if this be granted, the highest of such enjoyments must be that in which the intellect is supreme. Metaphysical science, not only as the foundation and essential establisher of all other sciences, but as it is in its own nature—an inquiry into the Philosophy of the mind itself—demands the highest abilities, imposes the weightiest obligations and holds out the most indis-

putable rewards which the mind of man has yet proved to be discoverable.

In a sense which cannot be affirmed of any other science, no valuable contribution once made to Metaphysics has ever been wholly set aside. The hypotheses of many other branches of knowledge have been found to be not only untenable, but entirely contradictory of the truth subsequently discovered and to have been stumbling-blocks to the ultimate acquisition of truth. But in every formal Metaphysical treatise we find the speculations of Plato, Abelard, Descartes as fully dwelt upon as those of Stuart Mill, Sir William Hamilton and Herbert Spencer; and not for purposes of comparison, rejection, derision or sublimation, but as the component parts of one great system or province of thought, not one feature of which can be slighted by the student with impunity. Plato still remains "the greatest thinker that ever lived," not in virtue of chronological priority, not relatively, not conditionally; but absolutely, positively, incontestably. By a kind of poetic justice not often encountered in Biographical History, time has had no power over those who have proved that the idea of time may be obliterated from the mind by the number and magnitude of man's thoughts in this life.

We do not allow that the mind really thinks until, rising above all that can address it through the senses or be predicated in material symbols, it bends its energies to the investigation of its own phenom-

ena, laws, powers and limits, and draws the proof of individual, personal, separate existence from its own consciousness. Consciousness is not only the sole guarantee of mental sanity, but the test of being. Pascal has rested all the dignity of our being upon this single prop. "Man is but a reed," he says, "the weakest thing in nature: but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the entire universe should arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But when the universe does crush him, man will still be nobler than that which kills him, because he knows that he dies, and the advantage which the universe has over him it knows nothing of."

John Stuart Mill, whom Dr. McCosh calls "the ablest opponent of intuitive truth in our own day," has acknowledged, unequivocally, that "whatever is known to us by Consciousness is known beyond the possibility of question." But this is, really, to grant all that the advocates of intuitive truth desire. The great thinker who made this admission was not permitted to follow out the conclusions which are to be drawn from it. It is impossible to realize the importance of these conclusions unless we know into what quagmires of error men have wandered from lack of this knowledge. Yet almost everyone has felt, directly or indirectly, the baneful influence of that Philosophy which denies the freedom of the will,—through some of the many forms of Literature, through the contradictions of an unhappy

destiny, in religious teaching, in historical teaching, in the unanswerable questions which arise in the mind in solitude, in conversation with those who are friendly as well as with those who are unfriendly. Now with respect to this one topic wonders have been wrought by attentive consideration of the knowledge given in Consciousness.

The idea of cause and effect lies back of this question of freedom in the will, for every volition not only suggests, but involves the idea of motive or cause. An immature Philosophy satisfied itself with the loose statement that "every effect must have a cause" and propounded this as a final law of thought, involving the mind in an inextricable series of causes, and teaching that the intellect must seek not only for a cause of the world, but of the Being who made the world.

Sir William Hamilton has an eloquent passage, in opposing this crude enunciation. Speaking of the Philosophy of the Conditioned, he says: "If the causal judgment be not an express affirmation of mind, but only an incapacity of thinking the opposite; it follows that such a negative judgment cannot counterbalance the unconditional testimony of Consciousness—that we are, though we know not how, the true and responsible authors of our actions, not merely the worthless links in an adamantine series of effects and causes." And rallying all his forces around this indisputable testimony, by a skillful use of the simplest analogical reasoning, he

declares: "If we are separated by our personality from the finite world without us, God, too, by his personality is separated from the finite universe which he has made." But Dr. McCosh, uniting a simplicity of expression with an intellectual penetration which has, probably, rarely been equalled, goes much farther. He teaches that the cognition of self and of body exercising power explains the true relation between cause and effect. Cause implies substance with potency. It is a primitive judgment. But the original judgment is not that every cause has an effect and *vice versa*, but that this thing having power may produce an effect. Then having established the position that the mind begins with knowledge, not impressions, not appearances, not sensations, not delusions, he can easily pass on to the assertion of the freedom of the will as a conviction manifested in Consciousness. This is rendered peculiarly emphatic as coming from Dr. McCosh because he has labored throughout his entire work on the Intuitions to define and limit the exact knowledge furnished in Consciousness, and this conviction of spontaneous power in the will is in perfect harmony with all that he teaches on this most difficult subject. For this knowledge, all-important as it is, is not furnished as knowledge, *i.e.*, as laws, principles, formulæ. Our intuitive cognitions are brought into form only by reflection and analysis, only through the processes of abstraction and generalization.

Thus Fatalism and its sister-error, Pantheism (if, indeed, they be not one and the same error), which threaten the peace and happiness of mankind more seriously than any other evil, are met and vanquished by a philosophical appeal to Consciousness.

The mind, as I have said and firmly believe, enters the realm of pure thought provided with the knowledge revealed in Consciousness. Every attempt in the study of mind presupposes this. The Experience or Association Philosophy is as securely built upon power revealed in Consciousness as any system of *à priori* Philosophy can be. The examination and investigation of mental power implies the possession, in a degree, of that power. This respect which the mind seems to have innately for its spontaneous energy is seen and might be studied to advantage in the uneducated. There is a deeply rooted popular belief in a knowledge which is not acquired. Men wish to be thought smart, not good. The one is only to their glory; the other (sobering thought!) to their credit. This is the distinction which Buckle so admirably makes between vanity and pride. "Pride," he says (reversing the order of consideration), depends on the consciousness of self-applause; vanity is fed by the applause of others. Pride looks within, while vanity looks without. Hence when a man values himself for that which he inherited by chance, without exertion and without merit, it is a proof not of

pride, but of vanity, and of vanity of the most despicable kind."

I have often asked myself for a philosophical explanation of the fact that people are much more willing to acknowledge themselves deficient in morals than in intellect. It may be that they know they might have been better if they had chosen to be, and that hence they are proud of the will-power exercised in *not* choosing to be ; but that recognizing the limits of their intellectual abilities, they are peculiarly sensitive to accusations from which they feel there is no appeal. Another and better explanation may be that as moral obligation presses and forces itself upon the attention of all, and all know that none have fulfilled those obligations in their completeness and comprehensiveness, shortcoming in morals is merely a relative thing, or the consciousness of it, at least, merely the bearing of a common shame ; but mental obligation, forcing itself, as it undoubtedly does, only upon the attention of the few, is revealed to the many solely by an accusation in which is involved a reference to the nobleness and grandeur of the human intellect, and this glory, being perceived for the first time or with an unusual intensity, cannot be relinquished without a pang.

This apparently superficial veneration for intellect may, indeed, be neither vanity, indolence or aspiration ; but if resolvable into an affection of Consciousness which has no warrant beyond itself, it

must be considered as a power capable of producing much mischief. Popular belief, as popular feeling, is only the echo of scientific enunciation. Now the appeal to Consciousness, *i.e.*, to the individual mind as the microcosm of truth, places a weapon of the most formidable nature in the hands of those who are the least capable of using it to advantage. When we reflect that the truth revealed in Consciousness is of a nature which doubt itself does but verify and confirm—since to doubt the existence of a thought is itself a thought of which one is conscious—we see at once that the appeal to this as an ultimate dictum or test of truth may be productive of errors which are final; as irremediable as they are incontrovertible; that there may be no limit to the extravagancies of the human intellect, no danger comparable to that of believing in one's own infallibility.

Such, in fact, is the testimony of History on this subject. The persecutor, the fanatic, the tyrant, and, strange to say, the sensualist and even the criminal are formed by a Philosophy which tells the individual to look into the constitution of his own mind and find there the justification of all that he desires to accomplish. What argument, what persuasion can be addressed to one who *knows* that he is right? What limit can be put to the power of him who is possessed of a "pure idea," the essence of an eternal verity, the reflection of the Divine Idea?

If Europe groaned and cried out in anguish under the dominion of that mode of thought which demanded nothing less than the extermination of the Albigenses, the Huguenots, the Calvinists of Holland, the Monastic Orders under Henry VIII., the Lollards, the Covenanters, the Jesuits under Elizabeth, the Jews in Spain, of Servetus, Bruno, Vanini, More, Fisher, etc., etc. *i.e.*, of all who dared to differ in opinion from those who were in power, not less did it suffer in being given over to a Philosophy of presumptuous ignorance and audacious self-will, from which the anarchy which disgraced the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century issued. History shows us that men have suffered less from despotism than from anarchy, or in philosophical language, less from Ideology than from Ergoism. There are few darker pages in its annals than those which record the horrors of the licentious sects which sprang up in Germany to exercise the "right of private judgment." The superstition which polluted Rome was not more terrible than the rationalism that convulsed Germany. Indeed from the "heroic age" of early Jewish History to the end of the French Revolution this experiment of every man's doing "that which is right in his own eyes" has proved an unendurable calamity. Men seem to have been driven by suffering to the belief that it is at least more probable that a few should be absolutely right, than that any or every one may become

infallible, and by foul means or fair compel his neighbor to agree with him.

That the meanness or the extent of the application of this test of truth has nothing to do with its peril is very evident when we remember that this weapon in the hands of one energetic woman was enough to shake the throne of France to its very foundations. In reading the "Life of Madame Guyon," our sympathies are so pledged to that brilliant genius, that devout spiritual nature, that blameless character, that we are indignant with those who, being in political and ecclesiastical power, condemned this gifted woman to a life of solitary imprisonment.

But when we look into their side of the question our opinion cannot but undergo a change. The contest was one in which absolutism was the sole stake, only Mme. Guyon had this inestimable advantage, that the absolutism she inculcated was one to be claimed by anybody, while the court and hierarchy of France could only claim it for themselves and their legitimate successors. In compelling the expression of the most extreme views upon this most complicated subject of Consciousness, and thereby alienating Bossuet and causing the disgrace of Fénelon, Mme. Guyon was undoubtedly helping to rivet the chains which the French nation has since broken only at a cost of inexpressible suffering.

Has not the Intuitive Philosophy proceeded to the absurd extent of countenancing an apotheosis

of the natural instincts? And doing this while it claims to support a theology which rests upon a Revelation declaring one of its express objects to be the enunciation of laws which are antagonistic to the natural instincts, could it possibly go farther in absurdity? We have only to look around us to see the pernicious effects of such teaching. As all refined and cultivated society demands the repression or control of the natural impulses and the ascendancy of reason over passion, this doctrine is permitted to exercise full sway only over the lower classes, who are really appealed to more as animals than as human beings. But only in theory are such excuses as "It is only human nature" or "It is perfectly natural!" of any significance. All practical experience goes to prove that in the contest between reason and passion nothing is more certain than the triumph of reason, though this triumph be but an empty show.

But the gravest of all spectacles, and one of the most tragic things in life, is this belief in Consciousness as the guide and judge of moral conduct. The fact that man does possess, in virtue of his very nature, the power of making moral distinctions is the most obvious fact in all Psychology. To what then shall he look as the interpreter of the special faculty called Conscience but to Consciousness? Yet it is in doing this that the gravest mistakes in life are made, for this it is which makes it possible to do wrong conscientiously, and never does man do wrong so

fully and so vigorously as when he does so conscientiously, or, as some one has said, "It is amazing how hard one who is a gladiator by nature strikes when convinced he is doing God service." Not to believe that some men have been inquisitors from conscientious motives is to believe that the human heart is capable of a desperate malignity.

How should we, then, not rejoice that there have ever been those in the world who refused to adopt this means of testing truth, and far from finding in the individual mind the criteria of Philosophy, proclaim that all our mental phenomena have material conditions, that nothing can positively prove that any particular one of the constituents of the mind is ultimate, and that, therefore, the appeal to Consciousness is not only shallow, but worthless? This is the great and indisputable charm of Metaphysics, that it is a field of inquiry in which there must be something to be controverted, or two ways of viewing the subject considered.

Buckle, with a great deal of unnecessary invective, warns us not to trust to Metaphysics in the generalization of mental laws, because there are two antagonistic schools of thought and no way of discovering which is right. He does not seem to be aware of the fact that there would be no such study as Metaphysics should one of these schools be merged in the other. It does not follow that because there are two schools of thought there is no way of discovering which is the truest. The right

conclusion is that there will be a great deal of difficulty in determining which is the truest and consequently a heavy obligation to seek every means to do so.

But the conclusions reached in Metaphysics are not those of Mathematics. Neither is the charm of the one study that of the other. In Metaphysics we have a tentative process, cumulative proof and approximate truth. In Mathematics we start with necessary truth, meet with no degrees of evidence, and arrive at an inevitable conclusion. Sir William Hamilton says, Mathematics are found more peculiarly intolerable by minds endowed with the most varied and vigorous capacities, and quotes Ludovicus Vives as declaring that "the intense and assiduous exercise of mathematical studies is the torture of noble intellects, of those born for the benefit of mankind." And George Eliot says in one of her Letters that it is a pity Mathematics can only give us absolute truth upon subjects that we care nothing about.

But it is not necessary to rail at the one study in order to perceive the merits of the other. The bias given to the mind by Mathematical reasoning (which being less complex than probable reasoning is generally the first to engage the attention), the almost universal tendency to dogmatize, and the love of controversy all point emphatically to the need of a science which will afford a different kind of mental discipline, and exercise a totally dissimilar influence

in the solution of the problems that relate to human welfare. For the science which has for its object the work of tracing the possible results of human knowledge to the first principles in the constitution of our nature must necessarily affect our lives in their personal interests more than any other science, and the method pursued in this science of sciences will modify the opinions of those who do not dream of the existence of such a science. Not a Novel, not a Poem, Debate, Argument, Sermon, Oration, Political Discourse, Essay, History, Biography or Autobiography, but must have its Metaphysics, whether the author, speaker or thinker be aware of the fact or not.

Those who know nothing of Metaphysics cannot imagine how there can be two sides of a truth; much less how one can rejoice that there is a different way of looking at truth from his own way. They ask, sneeringly, if we are to live in a state of "provisional doubt," or if the easy task of resorting to a pure eclecticism is to be the way out of difficulties, or if truth is to be found in a *via media* between two opposite propositions.

Imagine the daring of those master-spirits who first started out to discover how far the sea of human thought was navigable! Can a sublimer picture rise before the mental vision? Now as there is an external world and an internal world, as there are intellectual states of external origin, and intellectual states of internal origin, and as all

the knowledge the mind can acquire is either subjective or objective knowledge, man is pledged at the outset of his career to the building up of two distinct systems of thought. How natural, how inevitable that in "the youth of the world" each system should have allured those minds most in harmony with it by native bias! All History, as well as all Philosophy, goes to show that men are born into the world with a pre-disposition toward one of these modes of thought. An extended observation might show us the destiny of nations turning upon the predominance or subjection of subjective thought. Skipping over the narrower influences of the separate nation, has not History told us of whole Continents to be distinguished in this way? By what more fundamental difference is the Eastern world separated from the Western than by its attitude in the investigation and acceptance of supersensuous truth? Only in the countries of the rising sun have men abandoned themselves to the contemplation of one Great Idea, and, account for the fact as we may, the result is one which must be studied gravely indeed if the Western world is ever to pay back one half the debt it owes the East.*

* By a wondrous Metaphysical unification (far surpassing anything that could be foreseen or predicted by human sagacity) the people of the East are still irrevocably bound together as one people,—for the magnificent purpose which has been suggested in that exquisite book, "The Oriental Christ," recently published in this country by P. C. Mozoomdar of India.

The time has come when, looking back upon the work accomplished in Philosophy in past ages, we cannot be too glad that men have pursued each of these modes of thought to such exact and definite conclusions. Starting out with Plato and Aristotle, and following the controversies of the Christian Fathers, and the wranglings of the much abused Schoolmen; turned about by the marvelous "method" of Descartes, and set at rest again by the steadying pen of a John Locke or a Leibnitz, constantly and continuously do we see the mutual modification of the one system upon the other, until every expectation that truth can only be found in one or either of these systems is finally and forever excluded.

At this point a genuine honesty of purpose discovers that the true way to go about the search for truth is to study the Philosophy which is antagonistic to our natural predisposition and youthful training. This is just what people generally decline to do. They want to spend their strength in strengthening their native bias, because they do not really love the truth, and are not in search of it. But this willingness to hear all that can be said on the opposite side of a subject, that is within the limits of legitimate controversy (for to the eternal disgrace of Philosophical History, much intellectual ingenuity has been worse than wasted in answering the Devil's advocate), is the only fair test of a love of truth. Then it may be possible to attempt the

task that has actually been achieved in our own age by two of the keenest thinkers and sincerest truth-seekers the world has ever known. I mean Frederick W. Robertson and John Stuart Mill, from whose writings it would be easy to produce parallel passages teaching us that the whole truth is made up of the partial truths contained in two opposite propositions ; that "the writings of one school of thinkers are the richest mine whence the opposite school can draw the materials for what has yet to be done to perfect their own theory ;" that truth is to be inculcated suggestively, not dogmatically, provisionally rather than authoritatively.

Such a position is, of course, open to the wildest suspicions—of compromising, temporizing, vacillating, of unintelligibility, deception, fraud. He who would be one of the "thinkers above the multitude" must pay the price proportioned to the value of the prize. It may be enough for the many to know that there are such thinkers in the world.

Very superficial people have a great horror of inconsistency ; that is, of that inconsistency which is exhibited by a change in the expression of opinion and outward conduct. But the same people have no horror whatever of being false to inward conviction, false to the individual ideal, though there is no other real inconsistency. The world is full of those who are rooted in sectarianism, fearful of any change, effeminate shrinkers from the smallest suffering, morbidly afraid of public opinion and more

The more the mind is narrowed to the contemplation of one idea, warped by the cultivation of its own special idiosyncrasy, and goaded to the expression of the most emphatic assertions, the more easily it is labelled and honored (?) by men. On the other hand, the liberal minded man too often sinks into the contemptible latitudinarian, and earnest thought is frequently frittered away in attending to the claims of many subjects. That mind, then, which is both intense and liberal, capable of strong convictions and tolerant of the convictions of other strong minds, is too rare to come under any of the world's classifications. The comprehension of such independence as Sterling's is rightly reserved for the thoughtful few.

Strangely enough, the two men who (for the public good) undertook to divine this man who would bind himself to no prescribed mode of thought, no creed, no Philosophy, were, themselves, irrevocably given over to the most positive systems of belief and denial. We know the man Sterling almost as well from the slight sketches of Maria Hare ("Memorials of a Quiet Life") and J. S. Mill (Autobiography) as from the so-called Biographies of Julius Hare and Carlyle. Not until the private Journals of a gifted, but unknown and unassuming Quakeress were given to the world—after her death—and then only through the instrumentality of a friend—was a satisfactory light thrown upon the mental power and position of the man to whom the greatest Meta-

physician of the age wrote that he "would gladly exchange powers of usefulness with him."

Sterling was not a seeker after Speculative Truth, but he looked at every intellectual problem from a Metaphysical point of view. He seems to have done for practical truth very much the same work that Kant did for speculative truth. Both believed in an Idealism which makes man see the world not as it is, but as the forms of the intellect make it appear. But neither believed that truth is to be found only in ideas of pure intelligence and pure reason: this knowledge may be mere appearance: but the knowledge of actual experience cannot deceive, and this is the only reliable opponent of dogmatism and scepticism. Never losing sight for a moment of the objective reality of Absolute Truth, Sterling seems to have had a marvelous ability to refer every relative truth to this Ideal Reality, and insisting upon enlisting as a private in the army of truth that he might enjoy the greatest possible freedom, he waged relentless warfare against all systems of exclusive thought and dwelt, himself, in a world of inclusion which was as boundless as it was magnificent.

Such teaching from its very loftiness can influence the world only indirectly and mediately. Plutarch says: "As motion would cease were contention taken out of the physical universe, so all human progress would cease were contention taken out of the moral universe." If the Experience Philosophy is needed as a check to the glaring evils of a system

which resorts to the blind impulses of instinct, the visions of mystical enthusiasts, the dreams, the inconsistencies and contradictions of prejudice and wilful ignorance as the criteria of truth, how much more is it called for in the enunciation of the positive truths which are necessarily passed over and ignored in this same system. In teaching that all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience this Philosophy has led men to question the established order of things, and in doing this the world has made more progress in a few centuries (may we not say in a single century?) than it could ever make, or has ever made, in unlimited time under the dominion of the Intuitive Philosophy.

Politics or the Science of Government, a study worthy of man's best energies, has been found to be totally dependent upon this Philosophy, and it may safely be said that the very conception of the individual Liberty which we now prize among our noblest possessions was given to the world by its expositors. Now-a-days we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that the theory of the "Divine right" of kings was ever seriously discussed. History tells us that fiercer wars have never been waged than around this standard. It is evident that principles, not facts, were at the foundation of this controversy. We cannot suppose for a moment that the Europe even of the Middle Ages had the remotest idea that the Jews were permitted to have a king only as a punishment, a mark and proof of the

Divine anger. The power of habit ; the law of association ; above all, the stereotyped reference to the first principles of our nature as the Divinely sanctioned causes of all existing customs, will account satisfactorily for the general resistance that was offered to the few who dared to question the claims of a monarchical government.

It seems paradoxical to assert that the Experience Philosophy could have anything to do with political liberty when, in the same age in which Hobbes was teaching that man could be nothing but a materialist and government nothing but a despotism, the Puritans were deliberately decapitating Charles : and, later, when Condillac was putting the finishing touches to the Philosophy which taught that man was but the creature of circumstances, the French people were proving to the world's entire and terrified satisfaction that this same creature, man, may sometimes act as the creator of circumstances.

It was, evidently, not from the positive enunciations of this Philosophy that Cromwell drew his inspiration or Mirabeau his eloquence. But it was the great and indisputable fact that attention had been fixed upon the idea that man may rightly and lawfully scan the sources and origins of all his ideas, beliefs, customs and opinions that strengthened men to throw off the shackles of obsolete customs and "make way for liberty." And now this idea having gone abroad in all lands, it is utterly useless to suppose that any arguments, any fears or

any faiths can ever gainsay, much less suppress it. That there are deeply rooted ideas in the world to-day which are the result of the objects which excite them, of the comparisons which bring them together and of the language which facilitates their combination, no Philosophy can henceforth attempt to deny. That the effort to determine just what these ideas are, to separate those which do originate in this way from those which do not, has already engaged, and will in the future occupy, a vast amount of mental energy cannot be called in question.

The consummation of this work is not, however, to be looked for in the near future and not until many a desperate battle has been fought. For since the publication of Montesquieu's wonderful book, "The Spirit of Laws," which compelled men to look all existing institutions boldly in the face and evoked a tempest of anger, indignation and astonishment which has not yet subsided, no work of equal importance has appeared with the exception of J. S. Mill's searching inquiry into the nature and limits of social "Liberty." Even now it is rather to be regretted that this particular subject should have been treated by one who was so far in advance of his age, and who as a rapid, brilliant and fearless thinker was unable to sympathize with the timidity of his contemporaries, and, hence, has rather postponed than accelerated the reception of the magnificent ideas which form the essence of that work. In touching upon such topics as the incompleteness

of the Christian morality, the shortcomings of professed Christians and the desirability of a limitless discussion of vital articles of Faith, many have supposed that the author attempted an attack upon the Christian religion and an avowed inculcation of the idea that it is antagonistic to individual liberty.

Such topics are, really, only touched upon by way of illustration and elucidation. In order to understand the import of such a book we must remember that in directing our attention to any one subject we necessarily exclude all other subjects from the mind: and the more thoroughly trained the mind is, the better will it be enabled to exclude such subjects, or, in other words, the trained mind is logical and Logic shows us that there are laws of thought and of language, which, in virtue of the given subject, forbid the admission, or even the contemplation, of irrelevant subjects. The world, generally, knows nothing about such mental concentration. It thinks of a thousand different things while it reads the work directed to the solution of a single problem. It reads volumes between the lines of a dozen pages and often, indeed, stops at the end of the dozen pages without the slightest conception of their logical drift, drawing conclusions of its own, which have nothing to do with the author's. Instead of being the whole truth upon every subject, this single argument claims only to be a view of the truth based upon a certain hypothesis at the outset, for it must be remembered, from beginning to end,

that every premise within the limits of probable reasoning may be regarded as a mere supposition.

As to the objectionable topics above mentioned, a few words may explain away their obnoxious character. First, he who reveres the letter above the spirit of the New Testament is at heart a Jew, however much he may profess to be a Christian. Again, to what other cause can Christian civilization be ascribed than to the triumph of the spirit over the letter of the New Testament? Now all the incompleteness to which Mill calls attention is that of the letter. Secondly, in selecting any proposition as the first premise of an argument it is absolutely necessary to consider what the logicians call its quality and its quantity. The statement that professed Christians do not live up to the teachings of the New Testament may be taken in different senses. One may take it in the sense that no Christians live up to the teachings of the New Testament: another, that no Christians live up to any of those teachings: the true sense all the while being that some Christians do not live up to some of those teachings,—a fact most painfully evident to all disputants. Thirdly, in an argument like that of the “Liberty” the author takes up his pen for the express purpose of proving that liberty is an exceedingly desirable thing, but no one is compelled or desired to assent to the proposition that liberty is the only desirable thing. If by the free discussion of certain articles of Faith we see that we are about

to lose in one direction more than we can gain in another, no one can succeed in persuading us to prefer certain loss to doubtful gain. But we could scarcely expect any writer to advocate the advantages of authority while dwelling upon those of liberty. The remedy is in the advocacy itself, for nothing so quickly and successfully shows up the merits of the opposite argument as the over-ardent partisanship of the debater.

Within the limits of Philosophy proper, the Experience School has exercised a very significant influence in checking the tendency (in those who give themselves up to Metaphysical speculation) toward subtle thought. The aversion which practical minds sometimes feel for Metaphysics is undoubtedly to be traced to a proneness of this kind, which so often besets the thinker. All who have thought at all know that the human mind has a power to think thoughts which it cannot express. For all practical purposes such a power is useless. Still further, the slightest cultivation of this power seems to tend not only toward vagueness, emptiness and dissatisfaction, but toward error. Efficacious thought of the profoundest kind may be expressed so simply that it is, really, humbling to the pride of the intellect to find that it has exerted itself to arrive at such results. This very unflattering law of thought was quickly divined by the brilliant young French Philosopher, Vanvenargues, who says in his *Maxims* : "When a thought presents itself to us as a profound

discovery, and we take the trouble to develop it, we often find that it is a truth which has become hackneyed."

But we must not stop here. For the feeblest thinker is privileged to know that there is more reality in the process or act of thinking than in all the practical applications that can be made even from the thoughts of genius. And as Sterling says, "we may pass from knowledge to doubt, and thence again to knowledge; but it is a vulgar error to suppose that we return to the same knowledge in the same forms and under the same limitations as before." We need to be awakened to a sense of the reality in the act of thinking as well as in the thought itself. Among the wonderful Metaphysical expressions to be found in the Bible is the remarkable one: "We do know that we know."

The formal exposition of Metaphysical subtlety has probably never gone farther than in the Nominalism of the Schoolmen and the Idealism of Berkeley. Both (but especially the latter) are powerful testimonies to the immateriality of man's highest nature. There is not a flaw in the Berkeleian argument for the non-existence of matter. And, strange to say, while there is no argument which has been so generally regarded as the *reductio ad absurdum* of Speculative Philosophy, and none which seems less capable of affecting universal thought, the fact remains that few speculations have ever wielded a more extensive or more practical or more

lasting influence. It may be that between the scientific and popular acceptations of the word idealism there is very little in common. But this breach cannot widen beyond the limits of recognition. The loftiest power of abstraction, the grandest ability to substitute immaterial entities for the sensible phenomena which seem to mankind in general the only realities that exist, may be shared by the unknown student and the distinguished man of genius. Some may say this is but the privilege of temperament and has nothing to do with philosophical exposition. I do not mean to say that men (and boys and girls, too, for that matter) were not idealists before the time of Berkeley, and even before the time of Plato. Such a power is among the endowments of the race. But it is by the formal, philosophical exposition even of axiomatic truth that the world becomes conscious of such truth, and all the meaning of the education of the race lies in the identification of the individual mind with universal truth. It is the revelation of the power to see the world as we wish to see it, not as it is, but as it ought to be or as we should like it to be for our own personal purposes, and this by the direct apprehension of ideas, that has given its tone to modern literature, love, and life. The abuse of such a power (like that of all the powers which we believe to be Divinely implanted) is to be guarded against with vigilance.

While all that belongs to the Intuitive Philosophy

seems to be most in harmony with the truths and teachings of Revealed Religion, and therefore with the only trustworthy standard of morality, I believe there is no greater mistake than the supposition that this Philosophy alone exists in the interests of righteousness, and the Experience Philosophy, resting upon sensation as its basis, in the interests of sensational enjoyment and upon no other principle of action than that of selfishness. Too many noble men have given themselves up to the study of this last named Philosophy, too much invaluable aid has been given to the world by its advocacy, to permit an unprejudiced mind to believe this. Not only the existence of a world external to ourselves, and the inevitable recognition of sensation as the source and origin of many ideas; not only a native mental bias predisposing and impelling certain minds toward the contemplation of such ideas; not only the need of a counteracting force to the fatal tendencies of elemental forces in the Intuitive Philosophy: but purposes of a positive, affirmative nature, ends of a direct and immediate importance, demand the existence of such a school of thought.

It is evident that the world cannot hope to make much progress while the truth which has been ascertained, *i.e.*, knowledge as it now exists, is put before mankind or represented to the mind as an accumulation of incoherent, fragmentary guesses, bound together by no principle and amenable to no laws.

A conception of the unity of all knowledge; a

principle, plan or scheme for the interpretation of that unity, and an attempt to bind together all the known sciences by the bond of this unity, constitute the great need and desideratum of the modern intellect.

Herbert Spencer, the first to respond to this demand (at least to my knowledge) is an ardent advocate of the Experience Philosophy. And this is entirely in accordance with the expectations excited by this school. Its mission is to furnish hypotheses for experiment, to suggest the objective tests of truth and to show how far it is possible to go in the application of those tests. Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" is a most delightful work. On the single principle that all knowable phenomena pass from the imperceptible to the perceptible by the process of the integration of matter and concomitant loss of motion, *i.e.*, by a process of concentration which tends toward stability, the reader follows his guide through all the mazes of the sciences now known, and is given the perception of a unity and harmony in them which is as beautiful as it is unexpected. All the detailed phenomena of life, mind and society are interpreted in material terms, not as denoting the ultimate nature of things, but because these reduce our complex symbols of thought to the simplest symbols, and in such an undertaking some symbols must be used.

Even as an objective principle this may be condemned as inadequate, and of course is considered

so by those who prefer subjective theories of construction. At best it is but an explanation of a process of development, which is perhaps the least interesting aspect in which we can view any phenomenon.

Nevertheless, it is an effort in the direction of intellectual expansion; it has helped men to realize that man was made for truth, not truth for man, and that if knowledge can be consolidated for the time being upon any principle, it can be eventually consolidated on the right principle.

But after this Philosophy has done its best or its worst, or whatever it can do, we need have no fears in regard to the ultimate ascendancy of the Intuitive Philosophy, even as we know that "the good which is better than our best" must finally triumph over all things. The inestimable value which has been put upon this Philosophy is not without a profound significance. In all ages men have felt that there must be a reasonable explanation of that process of thought by which the mind transcends the material or outward, and forms well defined and positive conceptions of spiritual and immortal realities. And this explanation is only to be found in the Philosophy of innate ideas. Though we find that no scale can be so nicely graduated as to express the degrees of intellectual perception in men, careful induction and persistent analysis show us more and more clearly that there is in the minds of all men a universal part, and that Philosophy is

the pursuit of truth as it exists for intelligence in itself, not individual intelligence.

The appeal to Consciousness, however, is not the appeal to a power equally developed in all alike, but to that, which, being in its essence common to all, admits of a development to which no limits can be affixed. The extravagancies, the errors, the fanaticisms which have followed from a belief in innate ideas are the results of a feebly developed, inert, undisciplined Consciousness. Every time we think we deepen, extend and fructify the sphere of Consciousness. It is not a separate faculty, but neither is it merely the accompaniment, the mirror, the index of thought. It is a power in itself, affected by the thought and in turn affecting the capacity for thought; a power which, rightly comprehended, carries with it the heaviest of responsibilities. The greatest atrocities which have been perpetrated because men thought they saw and knew the absolute truth are forgiven, in virtue of the possibilities revealed in that clouded perception and that unperfected consciousness. They witness to the existence of a power which, in being capable of producing misery, is also able to give the highest happiness.

The spirit of Gamaliel was far more useful for the practical purposes of truth than the spirit of Saul the persecutor. But Gamaliel could never accomplish the work that was reserved for that same Saul. By not checking, not persecuting, not demolishing,

he might make it possible for truth to exist on earth. But Gamaliel fades from the page of history as Gamaliel still, while Saul, the persecutor, is transformed into the devoted Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ. And the world has always recognized this: it can freely pardon the wrong that is done through an over-ardent, even a misguided, enthusiasm; but it cannot forgive the wrong that is done through prudence, moderation or indifference.

Gamaliel thought that experience was the only reliable test to be applied to the New Religion, and was perfectly willing to put it to that test. So accustomed was Saul to look within for the criteria of truth, and so blindly had he followed the spontaneous dictates of conscience, that he verily thought he *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. He was not content to go his way and trust to what he believed the inherent weakness of the new belief to bring it to nought. His intensely subjective nature could not brook the existence of a belief at variance with his own. But the mental tendency which impelled him to cast men and women into prison because of their opinions made it possible for him to be the standard-bearer of Christianity.

The intuitive perception of truth is one thing; the interpretation of that perception another. For the laws of intuitive truth are not "written on the soul so that Consciousness can read off the inscription." But in these two forms of one and the same power

we find all that redeems humanity from degradation and vanity; all that makes life valuable now and proves beyond a doubt that it will be valuable hereafter. In the recognition of this power we see the Divine sanction for the cultivation of the intellect, and not until we feel that intellectual power comes from God and leads to God can we use it to any lasting purpose, or find in it the joy it was meant to give.





GLIMPSES INTO FRENCH LITERATURE.

A FOOLISH prejudice, transmitted from the English, who from time immemorial have been keenly jealous of Gallic renown, has given rise among us to a general impression that the Literature of such a people as the French must be rather frivolous and unmeaning; exciting and highly wrought, perhaps, but of no real depth and of very ineffectual influence.

To those who have had such thoughts it may seem strange to assert that all who have made a special study of the subject concur in declaring that it is the privilege of the French mind to be, more than any other, the expression of the human mind, that it has more of the special qualities, more of the good sense and general ideas that are common to man as man than any typical mind recognized in History.

It is to be feared that the mode of teaching the Language and Literature of France in our Schools and Colleges has not been conducive to the comprehension of their truly cosmopolitan character and just claims to universality. As Greek was once the common speech of the cultivated world, so is

French to-day. As Greek could never have played such a *rôle* if it had not had intellectual power behind it, neither can French have attained the rank it now holds devoid of the spirit claimed for it.

And it is especially, if not solely, in its Literature that the French mind has shown itself unrivalled. The French have not solved the problems of Politics; they have not sounded the depths of Art in any of her forms; they have not scaled the heights of Religion; they have walked with uneven steps in the highways of Philosophy. Let all this be granted: when we ask what they have done, we find that "in depicting humanity rather than the man of a century or a country, in seeking absolute and eternal truth rather than local and passing truth, the French have made of their Literature the Literature of all centuries and of all countries."*

Let me imagine that I am assuming the *rôle* of guide to those who have never before entered this charming realm of thought—taking care to stipulate that I only point out the merits of those writings which, within a limited time and under the objective conditions imposed by a provincial life, it has been my privilege to encounter.

One is naturally introduced to a Literature through the critical works of its language, as none but natives can tell us of the true objects of national pride. Here, then, we could scarcely hope to enter upon a task under more favorable auspices, for I

* Saint Marc Girardin.

know of nothing more beautiful and more captivating than the intellectual enthusiasm, the intense, whole-souled admiration for the achievements of compatriots, which distinguishes the French critic from every other critic; involving, as it always does, the indefatigable labor of independent research and issuing, to its undying honor, in the most searching analysis.

Going back to the very beginning, we find that the literary sceptre passed from Italy to Spain, from Spain to Africa, and from Africa to Gaul.* It is not easily wrested from that last grip. Although "Gaul was born to history only when it ceased to exist," History has been gracious enough to record that the greatest scholar of the fourth century, the world-renowned Ausonius, was a Gaul; that he received his remarkable education from his learned Aunt, Æmilia Dryadia, and that his mantle, falling upon Rutilius Numantianus, found in a Gaul a worthy successor of his genius and learning: all of which are events very significant in this embryo stage of intellectual development, for nowhere do coming events cast their shadows before them more unequivocally than in French Literature. One must be dull indeed not to catch at a clew which so soon makes itself apparent. French Literature, as well as French History, "develops itself like a judicial process." It not only has generic character-

* Amédée Thierry.

istics, but there is a systematic logical sequence running through every phase of its development.

It is interesting to know that there is a literary prestige to be maintained by those illustrious Franks who are eager to bear the flaming torch from hand to hand. Gregory of Tours, Frédégaire, Gerbert, (afterwards Pope Sylvester II., the Eneas Sylvius of secular History and one of the most accomplished Popes that ever reigned), Alcuin, Eginhard and Angilbert, though of European celebrity, are identified with French History and Literature as with no other.

But it is not until we enter upon the development of the French language itself, after the consolidation of the Romans, Gauls and Goths in the South, the Romans, Gauls, Franks and Danes in the North, of France, that this study becomes one of absorbing interest.

Of the five Romance languages formed by the union of the Latin and Teutonic idioms, the Provençal was Europe's first-born. Southern France being divided into several independent principalities and the one bond being that of language, every species of intercommunication fostered the rapid development of this language. The Troubadours of the *langue d'oc*, and the Trouvères of the *langue d'oïl* were, alike, *ceux qui trouvaient*, i.e., they were discoverers in the art of expression. With the former, rhyme and accent supplied the "quantity" of the ancients, an exquisite sensibility to music made the

ear the guide, or as Sismondi says, the pulsation of the heart, and they became the inventors of modern poetry. This Literature has one curious characteristic in the fact that most of its writers were men of noble blood. It was essentially the creation of an aristocratic class; of men of leisure, wealth and ardent feeling, untrammelled in the pursuit of pleasure and excitement. Many of the Troubadours were sovereigns. Guillaume IX., Count of Poitou, the celebrated crusader; Richard Cœur de Lion; Peter III., king of Aragon, the instigator of the Sicilian Vespers; Frederick II., the avenger of the Sicilians, and the great feudal lords vied with each other in devoting themselves *con amore* to the composition of Chansons and Sirventes, poems of love and war. The story of Blondell rescuing his master, Richard Cœur de Lion, from imprisonment, by playing a song they had composed together and being answered by Richard from within, has captivated all imaginations.

Among the lesser lights we find Sordello, whom Dante in his Divine Comedy meets with Virgil at the entrance of Purgatory; Gillaume de Saint Gregory, one of whose Sirventes is still preserved; Peyrols d' Auvergne, the popular chevalier, without fortune, fear or favor; Phenelte de Romain, the Aunt of Petrarch's Laura, whose inspiration seemed to her contemporaries "un vrai don de Dieu;" Rambaud Vaqueiras, who was devotedly attached to Boniface III., Marquis of Montferrat, followed

him to Thessalonica and became one of the conquerors of the Greek Empire ; Clara d' Anduse, the Sappho of this epoch, " whose verses, full of grace and passion, prove that the gift of poetry was not refused to the women of the Middle Age any more than to the women of antiquity and those of our day ; " Armand de Marveil, in whose lyrics much tenderness and delicacy is found, and who, as well as Armand Daniel, is mentioned by both Dante and Petrarch ; Amadiieu des Escas, who has left " Letters to Young Ladies," which reveal either the private manners and education of the noble gentlewomen of that age, or the ideal which existed in the brain of the poet, and hence the forecasting of those manners and that education ; Pierre Cardinal, who was the one satirist among the Troubadours, and Giraude de Riquier, who wrote an Epistle to the king, of Castile on the Servility of the Jugglers.

This great mass of Literature produced not one single masterpiece ; a very questionable authenticity vitiates the few fragments that remain ; it betrays neither lofty ideas nor vivid imagination. But it was the instigator and model of European poetry ; it introduced into the world's Literature an element that had not before been known—the unveiling of the sentiments, the spontaneous feelings, the unrestrained thoughts, and in doing this it becomes a subject of supreme interest. As the work of a whole people rather than of individuals (for kings aspired to be Troubadours, not Troubadours kings, and literary

taste was the bond of social intercourse), it indicates an important step in the intellectual advancement of the race ; "just as," Sismondi says, "the return of fine weather in spring is announced by the blooming of the flowers of the field and the verdure of the prairies, and not by some prodigy of gardens, aided and seconded by artificial means."

Very different indeed was the development of the Literature of the *langue d'oïl* on the banks of the Seine. The Trouvères, for the most part, were men of humble birth, keen observers, delighting in the exercise of thought rather than the cultivation of sentiment. They seem to have at once discerned that Literature could and should exist in other interests than those of passing pleasure. Instead of rhyme and accent they employed assonance and alliteration, the less sensuous form harmonizing with their ideas of the Art itself, for the Trouvères were not writers of lyrics and ballads like the Troubadours, but of satires, tales, legends and historical poems.

The most ancient, celebrated, and beautiful of these poems, "The Song of Roland," has come down to us in a state of perfect preservation, and is not likely ever to lose its hold on human interest. As I have had access to two versions of the original text of this poem and its renderings into modern French by Alfred Lehugeur and Leon Gautier, I can speak of the great French Epic with something more than the enthusiasm of mere historical interest.

The story is told with such ease, so luminously, so directly and pointedly, that its relation is more like the vision of successive tableaux than that demand upon the fancy, memory, attention and reflective powers which one is accustomed to associate with the thought of a long poem. It embodies the most striking features of the life of the times. The quaint, naïve conceptions of the Christian Religion, the hero-worship, the chivalry that was the ideal characteristic of feudalism, the military friendship (which in the case of Roland and Oliver is more beautiful than that of Achilles and Patroclus), the dread and hatred with which Christian Europe regarded the followers of Mahomet, all form that net-work of public sentiment which the individual character does but modify and illustrate.

Charlemagne has hastened to the rescue of the Christians in Spain as they struggle against the Mussulman princes, the threatening disturbers of the tranquillity and faith of Europe, and now

“There is not a castle which holds out before him,
Not a city nor a wall which still remains standing
Save Saragossa, which is on a mountain ;
King Marsile holds it, who loves not God,
Who serves Mahomet and prays to Apollo.”

“But,” adds the subtle trouvère, all eager as he is to anticipate both your dismay and the course of the narrative,

“But misfortune is going to overtake him ; he cannot keep it.”

Such is the puissance of the great Charles that Marsile is forced to sue for peace, and promises, if Charles leaves the country, that he will follow him to Aix, and be "converted to the Christian faith." When the Emperor asks his nobles what they think of this message, his nephew, Count Roland, is the only one who advises utter disbelief in it and the prosecution of the war. This is in direct opposition to the advice of a certain Baron Ganelon, so that when it is decided to send out one of the nobles to Marsile to announce the acceptance of his overtures, and Roland proposes Ganelon as this ambassador, the latter is filled with a furious wrath, and resolves to be avenged upon the man who has thus exposed him to peril, death and shame. But Roland has really incurred this misfortune through an excess of generosity. He wishes to go on the mission himself. But the unanimous opinion of Charlemagne and his peers is, that his courage is too fearless, his ardor too untamed. Like all perfectly true people, he never imagines there is such a thing as hypocrisy; believing Ganelon's courage to be genuine, he thinks only of giving him the wished-for opportunity to prove it. But Ganelon, "le felon, le parjure," conspires with Marsile for his destruction.

Charlemagne receives the message that all his propositions are acceded to, and as the French army prepares to leave Spain, Ganelon proposes that Roland shall have the command of the rear-

guard through the defiles of the Pyrenees. It is there that "the pagans" have planned to come upon him. Even then, had Roland, taken thus by surprise, consented to sound his ivory horn, and call the French army to his aid, he could have been saved. But not dreaming that he has been betrayed, such counsel is received with scorn, and so there in the vale of Roncevaux, fighting one of the most desperate battles that has ever been fought, he sees the bravest of the brave perish, and dying last of all, wounded, weak, alone, does verily, as the trouvère thinks, offer the world the spectacle of the perfect hero, the sublime patriot, whose last thought is of that "douce France" for which he so gladly lays down his life. I will not enter into the account of Charlemagne's sorrow, of the battle with Marsile, and the terrible punishment of Ganelon. Enough has been said to give an idea of the exceeding beauty of the poem. A thousand inimitable touches of the pen, here and there, add a charm to the narrative which cannot be described.

Both Géroze and Sismondi have given enthusiastic accounts of the other celebrated works in the *langue d'oïl*, but these interest us more in the light of History than from a literary point of view. The early romances of Ogier le Danois, of the fabulous Brut or Brutus of Britain, of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and of the Quest of the San Graal, will always be more familiar to us as traditions than as *chefs-d'œuvre* in Literature.

Very little is known of the writers of this period. Raimbert of Paris is supposed to be the author of *Ogier le Danois*; Chrétien de Troyes, of the *San Graal*; later on, in the *Alexandrine* cycle we find the names of *Graindor de Douai*, *Lambert li-cors* and *Alexandre de Bernai*.

Though critics say one can find the History of the times in these poetical works far better than in the *Chronicles* which claim to record that History, a very notable exception to this saying is to be found in the "*History of St. Louis*" by his faithful friend and zealous admirer, the *Sire de Joinville*. Nothing of later date has been able to supplant this unique work, and after the lapse of centuries it has even found its way into English. It conceals nothing—for the reason that there is nothing to be concealed. If at times we are tempted to smile over the crude conceptions of piety in that age, the next minute we are forced to blush in realizing how much manlier, truer, deeper is that piety than that which we have around us in the Nineteenth Century. It is a prophecy in Literature of a style of writing dearly loved by the French. It shows us that it is not enough to be filled with enthusiasm for one's subject; one must have a noble subject; it is not enough to project one's self upon the written page; that self must prove itself worthy to be projected.

For even now, at this early date, the French are beginning to show themselves very unlike the other nations in their ideas of Literature. Both the trou-

badours and the trouvères had invented forms, modes, expressions for thought. This was not enough. The genius that is peculiar to the nation is one which penetrates and reveals the spirit or essence of the ideas that are possible to man: "le viel esprit Français" is essentially a free-thinking spirit in the best sense of the word; a spirit "which launches without fear or afterthought upon that boundless world of intellect upon which the rules of conscience and the difficulties of practical life impose no limits."

In that struggle for the consolidation of new and mighty forces which characterizes the period known as the Middle Ages, a new mode of expression is sought; one more subtle, more profound, more in keeping with a spirit of examination and reflection, in a word, one of greater magnetism than had yet been known. It is in the Fable that this *viel esprit Français* exults, and in the treatment of this the French have never known a rival.

The Allegory and the Narrative in Verse go hand in hand with the Fable; and the famous "Romance of the Rose," begun by Guillaume de Lorris and finished by Jean de Meung; the Poems of the gambler, Rutbœuf, seeking in Art the refuge that he could not find in life; the fame of Jacquemart de Gelée, writing satirically and symbolically of the struggles between the spiritual and temporal powers, must at least receive a mention. And one noticeable feature in the criticism of Meung's portion of

the "Romance of the Rose" ought not to be passed over in silence, and that is the decided disapprobation expressed for the learning that is there displayed. This is so thoroughly French and so suggestive that we may well dwell upon it for a moment. The French demand in their writers enough erudition to make them stagger under the load; but should so much as an exclamation reveal the consciousness of that burden the offence is one which can never be forgiven. Knowledge of every kind must be so skillfully subordinated to *esprit* that not a hint betrays its obtrusiveness.

The earliest writer of the French Fable is known simply as Marie of France. Her style is pronounced clear, simple, natural and even elegant. In "Le Vilain qui Élève un Corneille" I find the theme which is hereafter to be elaborated so exquisitely by La Fontaine. But the great Fable (or rather, collection of fables) which was taken up by writer after writer, and continued after intervals of years, was the celebrated "Roman de Renart." This name is thought by some critics to have been the name of a person boldly given to the animal who is thus forever identified with it, and in this guise the representative character of the age is attacked with a vigor and a license which know no bounds. The Fabliaux constitute in reality "a complete writ of accusation against the leaders of society, both civil and political," of the Middle Ages. They were political and socialistic satires, aiming to lead the

people out of communism and anarchy into the well ordered paths of a constitutional monarchy.

The Farce was the Fable in action. Two hundred years before the time of Molière "*Le Vilain Mire*" anticipates "*Le Medecin Malgré lui*," and the secret of good Comedy—the study of real life—is found in the ancient "*Maitre Pathelin*." It may be as interesting to others as it was to me to find that the origin of the indispensable phrase, "*Revenons à nos moutons*," may be traced to this old Play. A woolen draper pleads against a shepherd about some sheep the shepherd had stolen from him, and as he continually digresses from the point to speak of a piece of cloth which his antagonist's attorney had likewise robbed him of, the judge is continually compelled to bid him return to his muttons.

But in this age of storm and stress other and graver weapons of reform are not wanting. The University of Paris was at that time the center of European learning, the fosterer of democracy and a kind of permanent Council in the Church. The Chancellor of the University was Jean Charlier Gerson, who represented the Church of France in the Councils of Constance and Basle, and who, being alike unimpeachable in piety, profound learning and political influence, had attained the pinnacle of earthly glory. Glancing into the History of the times we find the Dukes of Burgundy and Orleans contending for the regency during the minority of

Charles VII. On the murder of the Duke of Orleans by order of the Duke of Burgundy, the Chancellor of the University, fearing nothing but the condemnation of conscience, dared to pronounce a solemn eulogy upon the murdered Duke. For this act of virtue and courage he was condemned to a life-long exile; and then it was, that, having renounced everything that men call great, he wrote the immortal and sublime work entitled "The Imitation of Jesus Christ," which by the unanimous sanction of the Christian world has for four centuries been pronounced the most beautiful work that has issued from the hand of man. The humble monk whose name has so long been identified with this celebrated book was only the owner of the manuscript and the writer of the marginal notes and comments to which he has attached his name. The real author of such a book would not willingly flaunt his name in the face of the reader, and it is right and fitting that nothing but internal evidence should appear to prove its authorship. The ideal of a spiritual abasement greater than that which any other man has dreamed of could only come from one who "for conscience sake" had relinquished a position which was, at the least, as exalted as any that man has known.

Passing over the fascinating and touching Legends (of which Louis Moland gives an exhaustive and brilliant account), the Mysteries, Moralities and Sottises, which possess no literary value and are to be

regarded merely as indications of mental life and animation, we find ourselves at the opening of a new era—the wonderful period of the Renaissance. Among the most interesting names confronting us are those of a group of scholars gathered together for the purpose of studying the Classics and enriching and perfecting the French language. They are the brothers Du Bellay, Ronsard, Du Bartas, Baif, De Belleau. They published a manifesto entitled “The Defence and Illustration of the French Language.” Ronsard became the idol of the people, exchanged verses with Charles IX. and was ranked side by side with Homer. It is amusing to find that Tasso, trembling and unknown, came to ask advice of the author of “*Francus*.”

There were three schools of poetry at this period: that of Marot, that of Ronsard and that of Malherbe. Marot was the literary heir of a poet known from the manner of his life and from his sentiments by the name of Villon. It is a memorable name, because its owner seems to have been an ardent cultivator of that *viel esprit Français*, whose glory it is that “it repels prejudice,” and in falling heir to this spirit the Huguenot Marot was emboldened to give his countrymen a translation of the Psalms in verse. His most distinguished disciples were Théodore de Bèze, whose Latin version of the New Testament is so well worth having, and Saint Gélais, and while in the former Marot’s *näivete* develops into virility, in the latter the master’s elegance be-

comes insipid and sterile. Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné and Desportes were the disciples of Ronsard. In the fierce D'Aubigné we never find a tender sentiment or expression; all is violence and zeal; and one of the most striking discoveries which I, myself, have ever made in the curiosities of literary biography is that the maiden name of Mme. de Maintenon was Françoise d'Aubigné, that she was born in the town prison of Niort, that she was the grand-daughter of this same Calvinist, Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, and that it was the inheritance of his spirit which enabled her to live out one of the most remarkable careers which will ever be on record—a career in which there was not one single moment of “abandon du cœur” from beginning to end. Such far-reaching influences are not to be traced every day.

This age in which all is contradiction, ferment and distraction was in Literature an age of preparation, not achievement. The social, genial, communicative spirit of the French, the predominance of the reasoning faculty and the love of logic, have made them the masters of rhetoric, and no people have more profoundly honored thought than they in perfecting the instrument of thought. Neither the delicacy and grace of Marot nor the pedantic purism of Ronsard could give the language that finish and perfection which the French people felt that it must attain before it could be the vehicle of noble ideas. It was the school of Malherbe which gave that per-

spicuity, precision and harmony to the French language which has led to the saying : "Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français." One of Malherbe's most beautiful poems is addressed to a friend on the death of his daughter, and the lines,

" But she was in a world where the loveliest things
Have the worst destiny,
And a rose, she has lived as the roses live,
The space of a morning."

herald the dawn of modern lyric poetry.

I suppose no *résumé* of French Literature could be considered complete lacking the name of Rabelais ; and yet in my opinion Rabelais is so essentially un-French, that, aside from the fact that his name may soil my page, I feel an unwillingness to speak of him. I had read much about Rabelais before mere accident let his book fall into my hands, and since then a very decided reversal of opinion on many points has taken place. It is, however, a satisfaction to me to be able from personal examination to say that the classing of Rabelais with the great creators in Literature, with Shakespeare, Dante and Cervantes, is utterly nonsensical. Rabelais has much more affinity with the English than the French mind (especially with the characteristics of the English mind divined by Taine) and is rather to be ranked with Swift, Sterne and Carlyle, the great fault-finders, in whom disgust and bitter irony carry all before them, than with those who have seen so much that is beau-

tiful and noble in human nature. Instead of being a book for all time, "The Life of Gargantua and the Heroic Deeds of Pantagruel" is utterly without significance or interest if not read in the light of the particular time in which and for which it was written. Some critics think that it is almost inconceivable that Rabelais could have dared to publish this bitter satire even under the veil of allegory and buffoonery. But any admiration of this kind must dwindle away considerably when we remember that Luther was living at this very time. Yet if there are no great characters in the "Chronique Gargantuine," if as a whole it is scarcely to be mentioned as a literary effort, I am perfectly willing to acknowledge that there are profound ideas scattered throughout it, ideas which are still in advance of our own age, and which, yet, are at the foundation of social renovation. The idea that the highest duties are the highest pleasures; that evil cannot be checked by rules and laws; that is, by negative good; that the moralist who would suppress the practices he deems evil must be ready with his substitutes; that knowledge is to be regarded as a blessing to the soul, not as a toy for amusement or a tool for gain; that learning is to be applied to the practical purposes of life; that with right surroundings the soul will seek and desire what is right: these and many other noble ideas redeem the character of this, as they would, indeed, that of any book. The Pantagruelian Philosophy is the exaltation of learning, but Panurge is a human being whose faculties and

powers are highly developed, yet he is without a soul, showing that Rabelais felt intellectual power alone to be far from satisfying. But his view of life was necessarily narrow and one-sided, for, despite his hatred of monasticism, we find everywhere traces of his early training and the impress of the sexless mind of the ex-monk. As I have already said, the book is most interesting if read in the light of the ideas that were wholly new to the people of that age. Other nations have made more of Rabelais than the French themselves: seldom is the slightest allusion made either to himself or his book by Frenchmen.

Considered by some as a kindred spirit, but a writer who has made a far deeper impression upon general culture, is the great sceptical philosopher of this period, Michael de Montaigne. In view of all that has been written about Montaigne,* one is tempted to believe that every thinker has at some time made him the starting point of discussion. There are writers, who, even through their writings, interest us more as men than as authors, and Montaigne is one of these. In writing his *Essays* he tells us that he had no other object than to jot down what *he* thought and what *he* felt about the smallest matters as well as the greatest. He says he had all the virtues except two or three, that he never made enemies and that he was kind-hearted and emi-

* See Géroze, Saint Marc Girardin, St. Beuve, Lucas Collins, Sir James Stephen, Sterling, Guizot, Mennechet, Besant.

nently selfish. The lasting popularity of his book seems to be due to the fact that he really did succeed in producing a faithful pen-portrait of himself, an undertaking in which all the probabilities are on the side of failure. Montaigne has not made himself out any better than he was, and no one has ever been inclined for a minute to be carried away with admiration for him : and he has not made himself out worse than he was, and all feel that anything can be pardoned sooner than that weak self-depreciation which is often the flimsy covering of the deepest vanity. The title of sceptic has clung to him for want of a better designation rather than any inherent fitness. Pascal considered Epictetus and Montaigne as the two greatest defenders of the two most celebrated sects in the world, the one exalting human nature to its loftiest height, the other humiliating it to its lowest depths. He deemed it necessary to know both to know the truth. But it is evident that Montaigne had made a more profound impression upon Pascal than Epictetus, though how a mighty intellect like Pascal's could be so greatly influenced by such a mediocre intellect as Montaigne's is one of the enigmas that will never be solved. There is, however, something so genuine, frank and unpremeditated in Montaigne's Essays that no intellect can remain passive under their influence. Pleasurable temporary excitement there must be. He seems to have fully realized that self-duality which is in our nature, and his book is a

dialogue not between the rational and irrational natures, but between the dual mental nature which is recognized only by the thinker. It is evident that he prided himself upon the eccentricities of his character, and being keen enough to discern them at an early date took no small pleasure in cultivating them. His whole life is in his book: his marked social isolation (for he knew none of the celebrities of the times, and no one then dreamed that for the tens who would read Ronsard there would be thousands who would read Montaigne); his passionate and ideal friendship with Etienne de la Boëtie (all his cynicism, stoicism and scepticism entirely giving way when he speaks of the affection which had found its way to the *penetralia* of his heart, and no one has written more beautifully of friendship); his utter incapacity for happiness in married life (it being rather shocking to find that one who had made the experiment could write so disparagingly of it), and finally, his intense satisfaction in the adoration of Mlle. Marie de Gournay, his adopted daughter.

The finest criticism of Montaigne which I have ever encountered is that of Saint Marc Girardin. He says: "Formerly morality had been a science of the clergy under the name of casuistry. It was an intricate system, understood by few. Montaigne effected the secularization of morality, a revolution as powerful in its influences as that of Luther."

It is in Montaigne that we find the beginning of that epigrammatic prose which in the French

“Maxims” rises to a point of perfection never approached by any other people. For instance: “’Tis a misfortune to be at that pass that the best touchstone of the truth must be the multitude of believers, in a crowd where the number of fools so much exceeds the wise.” And again: “We must be content with the light which it pleases the sun to communicate to us by its rays: let not him who would lift his eyes to take a greater portion into his own body find it strange if, as a punishment for his temerity, he loses his sight.” Montaigne is best contrasted in point of style with his contemporary Amyot, the translator of Plutarch. Amyot represents the *patois wallon*, marked by grace, elegance, delicacy; Montaigne, the Gascon, lively, petulant and bold.

Standing on the threshold of the great century whose grand characteristic is its instinct of companionship as to Literature and Art, we have still to consider the fame of one who, self-condemned to an isolation “such as no anchorite ever emulated,” has been pronounced the greatest genius of the French nation. Perhaps no single mind has wielded so extended an influence as the mind of René Des Cartes, and certainly no philosopher ever wielded a more practical and beneficent influence. It is not necessary to read the “Discours de la Méthode” to know the peculiar features of the Cartesian Philosophy. All subsequent French Literature is the reflection of that Philosophy. But unlike other

purely philosophical writings, those of Des Cartes have a literary value—the secret of their unparalleled popularity when first published, and, in part, the explanation of their perennial charm for the book-loving of each succeeding generation. The glory of having been the first through the long march of the ages to dethrone Aristotle, and of being the inventor of German Philosophy (for when detractors of the French ask sneeringly what they have invented, the answer must be this at least),* pales before that of giving life and character to the entire Literature of a great people.

The works of Des Cartes were not only read at once by everybody; they became the theme of universal discussion and the model of all good writing. A foreigner must wonder how it was that the society people of France could be so carried away with the abstruse speculations of the most subtle of metaphysicians. It is explained most delightfully by Taine. The Cartesian Philosophy teaches the art of grasping universal truths. “Now,” says Taine, “the leading by an agreeable path to general notions, the taste for these notions, as well as the custom of treading this path, is the peculiar mark of well-bred people.” So then, greatly to our astonishment, we find the exile in Amsterdam and the gay world of Paris in most perfect harmony as to the true aims and objects of intellectual culture. Social intercourse has been brought to such a state of perfection in France

* See Sir James Stephens and J. S. Mill.

only because refined tastes and agreeable occupations go hand in hand with mental development and actual achievement in some province of thought.

The great century opens with a very pleasing picture in the Hôtel Rambouillet, where the gifted men and women of the age gathered around the charming Catherine de Vivonne, the Marquise de Rambouillet. That literary court where manners were refined and the aristocracy of intellect proclaimed did a noble work for France. Not only were sparkling and animated conversations *en règle*; it became and long continued the fashion to discuss and circulate writings in manuscript, so that no literary effort could be a complete abortion and every writer was judged by his peers.

Voiture, Balzac, Bensérade, Ménage, Mlle. de Scudéry, Sarrazin, D'Urfé, Mme. Deshoulières, Mme. de La Fayette, Mme. de Sablé and Mme. de Sévigné are the most prominent names of the Hôtel Rambouillet.

Balzac, author of the "Christian Socrates" and "Conversations with Menander," was the oracle of the society; Voiture, who excelled every one in agreeable jesting and brilliant conversation, was its hero. Of Madeleine de Scudéry Ste. Beuve says: "She was one of the institutions of the century at the moment of formation and transition." But she was much more: the first to bear away the prize for eloquence founded by the Academy, her career extended throughout the century and neither time

nor criticism had power to dim the brilliancy of that career. D'Urfé had invented a kind of romance on the order of the ancient eclogue and idyl, the lords and ladies of the Court being disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses. In the "Cyrus" and "Clélie" of Mlle. de Scudéry the lords and ladies were transformed into the heroes of antiquity. Character-painting became the fashion of the day, an amusement in which the great Mademoiselle, as she was called (Mlle. de Montpensier, Louis XIV.'s cousin), delighted and excelled. Her own character must have been one of the strongest of the age, full of *verve*, vim and boundless energy. Through her personal interposition for Condé both at Orleans and at the Bastile, the war of the Fronde was brought to a close. A probable reaction setting in after such excitement, and in default of the active career denied by her position, she became deeply interested in a certain M. de Lauzun and formed the extraordinary project of marrying him: and although the king forbade that the marriage should be made public, the affair was, of course, generally known, and gave *éclat* to the originality, strength and independence of the Great Mademoiselle, endearing her to the people. The "Divers Portraits" which were her favorite pastime, and never looked upon as anything but a pastime, suggested and finally issued in "Les Caractères" of La Bruyère, one of the most agreeable moral dissertations ever written,

La Bruyère's style is not only inimitable, but altogether untranslatable. One would not know that any language could be so piquant, vivacious and brilliant had he never written. But while his humor is delicious, his sarcasm is withering, and whom does it not reach? The compact little classic seems to treat of everything. Despairing of conveying any just idea either of his subject or style, I am yet unwilling to give up the attempt. Speaking of the much berated subject of Platonic friendship, he says: "Friendship may exist between the sexes exempt from everything objectionable. A woman, however, always regards a man as a man, and reciprocally a man regards a woman as a woman. This connection is neither passion nor pure friendship; it forms a class apart." In anatomizing the heart, he says: "We wish to make all the happiness, or if that cannot be, all the unhappiness, of the one we love:" and again: "The heart alone conciliates contrary things and admits the incompatible." There is penetration in the saying: "Liberality consists less in giving much than in giving appropriately."

And now every great name suggests another. It is not possible to speak of Mme. de La Fayette and not of La Rochefoucauld. The one created the veritable Romance; the other embodied the observations and reflections of a penetrating intellect and a stormy life in a series of pithy sayings which were universally recognized as Maxims.

For Mme. de La Fayette's celebrated book, "The Princess of Cleves," there is nothing but praise. It is a masterly analysis of the human heart and anticipates the situation developed in "Polyeucte," "Hamlet" and "Romola,"—the combat between love and duty, a theme chosen only by the greatest artists.

The life of La Rochefoucauld seems to divide itself naturally into four periods, each known by his friendship with a distinguished woman. His first years of social and political life were spent in devotion to Mme. de Chevreuse, the enemy of Richelieu, whose intrigues, however brilliant and exciting, terminated in flight and exile. When, therefore, he entered upon the Fronde and his connection with Mme. de Longueville we are not surprised to find him playing a very unworthy part. He emerged from the Fronde without distinction of any kind, nearly blind, disappointed and irritated. It is during this third period, at the *salon* of Mme. de Sablé that he becomes a moralist. His Maxims do not, indeed, contain any inculcation of morality, nor do they pretend to reveal new impulses to duty and right living. They are simply statements, "holding the mirror up to nature," and relying upon this indirect means for their effect. The following may not be the best, but they are those with which I perfectly agree :

"Greater virtues are necessary to sustain prosperity than adversity."

“The mind attaches itself by indolence and habit to that which is easy or agreeable. This habit always puts limits to our knowledge, and never does any one take the trouble to extend and conduct his mind as far as it could go.”

“There is no disguise that can long conceal love where it is, or feign it where it is not.”

“The desire to talk of ourselves and to make known our faults from the point of view that we wish them to be looked at makes up a great portion of our sincerity.”

“It belongs only to great men to have great faults.”

“There are reproaches that praise, and praises which reproach.”

“We have more power than will, and it is often to make excuses to ourselves that we imagine things are impossible.”

The portrait which La Rochefoucauld draws of himself in his *Memoirs* harmonizes well with the *Maxims*. Their author is melancholy, has moral inclinations and feelings and loves to talk of them; is not carried away by ambition and is conscious that he is not capable of great passions: finally, his character is full of a fatal irresolution and he seems born to be an observer rather than an actor on life's stage. It was during the last years of his life that he was happy in the friendship of Mme. de La Fayette, whose “*Princess of Cleves*” was written to

repudiate the calumny by which the vulgar seek to suppress the friendships they cannot comprehend.

We like best to associate La Rochefoucauld with Mme. de La Fayette, because she had the profound satisfaction of saying, "He made me clever, but I reformed his heart." But the fame of the keen thinker is much more closely connected with Mme. de Sablé.

M. Cousin gives us a study of her character as one of the representative characters of the Seventeenth Century, not so well defined or distinctive a type, perhaps, but, nevertheless, one of the most valuable portraits of this all-engrossing age. While no remarkable merit in any one department is claimed for her, she is still remarkable throughout her life. After her unhappy *mariage de convenance* we find her at the Hôtel Rambouillet, charming every one by her preëminent fitness for social life. Indeed she seems to have had a genius for friendship, and the many cordial letters from the most distinguished people of the time still testify to the interest she excited. Remaining true to the Queen and Mazarin during the Fronde, she still retained the unwavering friendship of the Comte and Comtesse de Maure, fiery Frondeurs, and even that of Mme. de Longueville. Often did she intervene to soften animosities and conciliate the unfriendly. We find her at the Saturday receptions of Mlle. de Scudéry, a true *précieuse*, taking active part in the preparation of the "Divers Portraits." Later, Mme. de Sablé went to

live among the Port Royalists of Paris, influenced by the conversion of Mme. de Longueville, though the latter was not yet a Jansenist. Here she sometimes lived in great seclusion, disappearing entirely from the world. But, again, she would make her little house a miniature Hôtel Rambouillet. Nicole, Arnauld, Dornat, Pascal, Mme. Perier, the Princess Guymené, Mme. de Hautefort, La Rochefoucauld and Mme. de La Fayette gathered around her. Mme. de Sablé's talent consisted in a politeness that left nothing to be desired. Her tact, her cultivated taste and happy manner never failed to send her visitors away in an agreeable frame of mind. To her *salon* French Literature owes a distinct style of writing—Maxims, Sentences and Thoughts. 'A few unpublished writings from her own pen have been found, on the Education of Children, on Friendship, and a few Maxims. But the intellectual work of her life was accomplished in influencing the writings of La Rochefoucauld. It is noticeable that the idea of man's utter worthlessness prominent in this celebrated writer is an harmonious accompaniment to Jansenism. It is also more than probable that we should never have had the *Pensées* of Pascal but for this *salon*. Among the most interesting correspondents of Mme. de Sablé were the great Angélique Arnauld; Gabrielle de Rochechouart, sister of Mme. de Montespan and Abbess of Fontevrault; the Comtesse de Maure, who, had her attention been given to Literature, would have made

another Saint-Simon; Arnauld d' Andilly and Voiture. But as the very object of her existence seems to have been to make other people appear, it would be useless to attempt to mention the numerous throng around her. No taint or spot rests upon her. She has shown the world that a society woman can be pure and lovable to the last.

In striking contrast with the gentle, spirituelle Mme. de Sablé is her gifted and brilliant contemporary, Mme. de Sévigné. How one devours the charming Letters to her Daughter, which from any other pen would exhaust all patience! Macaulay said to M. Guizot: "Amongst modern works I know only two perfect ones, to which there is no exception to be taken, and they are Pascal's 'Provincials' and the Letters of Mme. de Sévigné." Nothing escapes the penetrating, versatile writer, and these Letters give one a better idea of the age than any History can give. The Literature of the period, the pulpit eloquence, foreign and domestic politics, the disgraceful wars of Louis XIV., the Court-life,—all are discussed with that admirable *finesse* which belongs to genius alone. The critic, Roche, says: "There is perhaps no woman who has carried the taste for books so far." Thoroughly familiar with the Literature of her own country, she also read Latin and Italian authors with as much delight as ease, and so lightly did all this learning rest upon her, that she never seemed conscious of the burden, but simply enjoyed it and laughingly acknowledged

that it was always "at the tip of her pen." But her greatest glory is that never does this well-trained, cultivated, astute intellect get the better of her heart, and we are charmed to find that "there are certain of La Rochefoucauld's Maxims which she does not understand." Writing with all the ease, grace and abandon of one who never wrote for fame, Mme. de Sévigné effaced the glory of Balzac and dimmed that of Voiture; her letters were circulated among a large circle of acquaintances and known by certain titles long before they were collected and published.

This literary society had, as we have noticed, gathered around the affable hostess of a private dwelling. It is to the immortal glory of Louis XIV. that he was not content to have it so. Though all external things were prepared to make the age a remarkable one, it was the individuality of the King—*une grande âme*—that made it what it was. He inspired all to do their best. It was the ambition of his life to reform his kingdom, beautify his Court and perfect the Arts. The Court-Literature of France is unlike any other. There is in it the most perfect equilibrium of style and subject-matter, the most exquisite adaptation of form to idea, the clearness and the brilliancy not of the natural crystal, but of the polished gem.

Of the three great writers who make its chief glory, Corneille, Molière and Racine, Molière is, perhaps, the most wonderful. Other writers, as well

as Corneille and Racine, have succeeded in Tragedy, but Molière is the only writer of genuine Comedy. He shows us what real gayety is, the dearest possession of a Frenchman. But it is not the gayety of Molière that is most striking. A profound philosophy, an inculcation of morality relying solely upon ridicule and not at all upon pedantry, bombast or cant, and a fearless courage in attacking the weaknesses not only of humanity, but of this special age, the Court, the society, the character of the men and women around him, combine to make these Comedies the most remarkable that have ever been written.

It is said that "*Les Femmes Savantes*" was directed immediately against the affectation and false taste generated in the Hôtel Rambouillet. Truly does it reduce pedantry and self-conceit to an unutterable absurdity. Among the characters there is scarcely one free from ridicule. These—the husband and wife, Chrisale and Philaminte; the two daughters, Armande and Henriette; the uncle and aunt, Ariste and Bélise; Clitandre, the lover of Henriette and Trissotin, "*le bel esprit*," are vividly drawn and, once known, cannot easily be forgotten. Chrisale is completely under the control of his dictatorial, domineering wife. His brother, Ariste, in opening his eyes to the fact, does more, for he says :

"Your wife, between ourselves,
Is by your weaknesses your ruler,
Her power is only founded on your feebleness."

This is one of Molière's most admirable traits ; it is by such slight touches that he shows us how the negative failings of some form a basis for the positive wrong doings of others. The pedantry of Philaminte is made more ridiculous than that of the other "philosophes." This is due to the fact that women in France had played, and were in Molière's time playing, a conspicuous and responsible rôle, and the direction of their studies was affecting national education and the future Literature of the country. Voltaire says "the number of women who made this great century illustrious is one of the great proofs of the progress of the human mind." Mme. Dacier, whom he calls "one of the prodigies of the century," translated the Iliad, and M. Cousin says "it is the only French version of the ancient and *naïve* epic worth reading. Abundance, simplicity, energy and movement are not wanting and the general impression that it makes on the mind of the reader does not differ from that produced by Homer." Mme. de Sévigné tells Mme. de Grignan that in reading Petrarch she must be sure to read the Commentary by Mlle. de Scudéry.

Habituated of the Hôtel Rambouillet, both men and women, called themselves *les précieuses*, i.e., those who wrote and spoke with elegance. Molière's Play, "Les Précieuses Ridicules," satirizes them unmercifully, but as it has more of a local and passing interest, we shall confine ourselves to the "Learned Women," which had a more direct influence in

turning the tide of ambition and leading to that enviable type of character which has made a Frenchman say: "It is to our women that we owe that genius for conversation, that keen sense of the proprieties, that delicacy of sentiment, that urbanity of language which have distinguished French Literature among all the Literatures of Europe."

Chrisale makes himself rather ridiculous in his tirade against learned women. But Clitandre expresses a good idea in saying,

"I do not wish her to have the shocking passion
Of desiring to be learned in order to be learned."

The plot turns upon the marriage of Henriette with Clitandre, who is thoroughly sensible throughout. But Henriette's mother wishes to marry her to the savant, Trissotin, whose flattery she returns in full measure. Chrisale and Ariste are determined that the young girl shall not be sacrificed to this whim, and to checkmate Philaminte, Ariste arranges a little snare. Notice arrives that the parents of Henriette are bankrupt. Trissotin at once withdraws his claim, and even Philaminte is forced to acknowledge his baseness. Henriette wishes to release the faithful Clitandre, when Ariste makes known that it is simply a test he has, himself, applied to the lovers, and the marriage takes place and all ends happily. Bélise, who imagines every man enamored of her, is ridiculous to the last. Armande, the envious sister, is not happy herself and,

consequently, is unwilling that any one else should be. Trissotin's poetry and the comments of his affected hearers are very droll. The Play is a bold satire upon certain literary aspirants of the day.

"Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" is perhaps the most thoroughly humorous of Molière's Comedies. It is the portrait of a *parvenu* who considers it "an honor to lend his money to a person of condition." M. Jourdain, his wife and daughter, Cléonte, the lover of this daughter, her maid and his valet, a marquise and her lover are the chief characters. At every step M. Jourdain (*le bourgeois*), in his desire to ape the gentleman of leisure, makes himself a dupe. In his lessons in dancing, music, military tactics and philosophy, especially in this last, he is truly ridiculous. One cannot remain unmoved when, in learning to write a letter, he says: "I do not wish either prose or verse." To which his master gravely replies: "You must have one or the other." The "Why?" of Jourdain which follows is certainly a masterly exposition of his thoroughly feeble intellect and of the monstrous degree of self-love that could blind him to it.

The most interesting portion of this play to me is the conversation between Cléonte and Covielle about Lucile, which is said to be a description of Molière's wife, the young girl of seventeen whom he married at the age of forty. The whole passage, beginning:

"In the first place she has small eyes."

"It is true she has small eyes, but they are full of fire, the most brilliant, the most piercing in the world, the most touching that one can see:"

and ending with,

"I wish to know the strength of my heart to hate her, to leave her, beautiful, full of attractions, amiable as I find her,"

explains Molière's endeavors to overcome his passion for so unworthy an object and his hopeless infatuation. Colored by a knowledge of the persecutions which he suffered for his moral courage, of the trials incident to his life as an actor, of the intense physical pain which he endured and which terminated in his death on the stage in the midst of a Play for the amusement and entertainment of people, this revelation of a betrayed and wounded heart gives a sacredness to the august name of Molière.

The development of "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*" culminates in the marriage of Lucile and Cléonte. The latter confesses that he is not a gentleman in M. Jourdain's acceptation of the word, and *le bourgeois* refuses him his daughter, though the young man is in every way worthy of her. Their friends then join in a conspiracy to entrap Jourdain by the very means he has himself discovered to them. They pretend that Cléonte is the son of the Grand Turk. M. Jourdain is at once overcome with

the honor and glory that will accrue to himself as the father-in-law of so distinguished a person. It is impossible to imagine a more perfect foil than the one for which this man, himself, has forged the instruments and prepared the means. By a few strokes of his magic pen, Molière shows that "our deeds are our doomsmen."

"The Misanthrope" is the most poetical and the most tragic of the Plays. Alceste, the hero, is so disgusted with the world's flatteries, fawnings, and civilities which "treat the honorable man and the rascal in the same way," that he avows his hatred of the whole human race. His friend, Philinte, has an entirely different disposition and thinks it a folly without equal to attempt to reform the world.

When an aspiring author reads his sonnet to Alceste and Philinte, the latter declares himself charmed, while Alceste is unsparing in his criticism. Here Alceste appears honest and straightforward and gains our respect, while Philinte is either incapable of judging or a base flatterer. But while Alceste wishes to condemn the whole world he finds himself the victim of *une grande passion* for the typical French coquette, Célimène. There is something very comical in this situation. The young widow of twenty years is surrounded by lovers, and as she is perfectly convinced of her own attractions she says and does what she pleases. It is during the visits of her admirers that Molière puts into her mouth his most cutting sarcasms on the foibles of the human

family. "The man who says everything in one's ear"; the "tiresome relator of anecdotes"; the "poor-spirited woman"; the "man inflated with self-love"; he "who labors to be witty" find no mercy from the audacious belle.

All this time Alceste has a lawsuit, which, disapproving of the ordinary means taken to secure success, he refuses to aid and consequently loses. Just at this juncture, Arsinoé, the spiteful prude, who forms a striking contrast to Célimène, reveals to him the real character of his lady-love. She has overstepped all bounds in writing most equivocally to two of her friends, "taking off" her other admirers, and especially Alceste, in the most uncalled-for sarcasm. All eyes are opened. But Alceste is so completely ensnared that he is willing to excuse all, even this "unkindest cut of all," if Célimène will agree to retire with him from the world. But the heartless coquette has no idea of relinquishing the admiration that has made so large a part of her happiness, and the broken-hearted misanthrope declares himself

"Betrayed on every side, overwhelmed with injustices."

It is impossible not to regret that the many good qualities which Alceste possesses should be so overshadowed by his morose, gloomy, ungenerous temper. Molière seems to teach here that sympathy with our fellow men is the surest preventive to betrayals, impostures and injustices. Certainly by

putting ourselves in the places of others we gain an insight of character which no other means can give. And he who has eradicated his own weaknesses will be the last to be a censor of other men.

Corneille, the sublime painter of heroism, is of all the great writers of France, the only representative of that type of genius which is artless, *naïve*, unreflecting. He cared nothing for the art of writing, and still less for the canons of good taste and approved style, and never spoke his own language correctly. Fully realizing the inexplicable power of genius, he abandoned himself to its guidance and followed wherever it might lead. An actor once brought certain of Corneille's lines to him to have their meaning explained. Corneille replied: "I do not understand them any too well myself, but keep on reciting them; those who do not understand them will be the very ones to admire them," in which remark there is a whole volume of instruction as to the scope and intent of imaginative writing.

Corneille showed his implicit reliance upon the self-sufficiency of genius in choosing the subject of the *Cid*;—a Spanish piece, representing the enemies of France and Richelieu in the most favorable light; a piece in honor of the duel, which Richelieu had prosecuted with rigorous justice; finally, a piece in which the ideas of royal majesty were totally opposed to those prevailing around him. But the fact that everything was against it, combined with that of its complete and perfect triumph, in-

creased its renown ten-fold, and to this day the French people say: "Beautiful as the Cid."

It is the story of lovers who, when just about to be married, find their fathers embroiled in a deadly feud. Don Gormas, the father of Chimène, has insulted Don Diègue, the father of Rodrigue, and nothing remains for Rodrigue but to avenge the outrage, while Chimène has the horrible alternative before her of seeing her father or her lover killed by the other. Don Gormas is killed. And now the struggle in the breast of the unhappy girl is greater than ever, for honor, pride and filial tenderness compel her to fulfill the cruel duty of demanding justice from the king and the death of her lover. At this crisis the Moors attack Seville, and the courage of a young warrior (none other than Rodrigue) at the head of a few friends saves the city and bears away a glorious victory. The king, in seeking to overcome Chimène's ardor for the punishment of Rodrigue, tells her that

"The Moors in fleeing have borne away his crime."

But Chimène is unconquerable, and the king consents to a combat between Rodrigue and Don Sanche, who is also a suitor for the hand of Chimène, on condition that she marries the survivor. Neither combatant is killed, and while Rodrigue is the victor, and the lovers are finally reunited, there is no suggestion of comedy in this happy *dénouement*; all has been so serious, so exalted and noble,

that the effect is one of those rare impressions produced by the union of the beautiful and the sublime, when we cannot tell which quality predominates.

But Corneille soars far above the portrayal of passion. He sought in man not that which yields, but that which resists, not the weakness of the human heart, but its strength.* This noble ideal is embodied in the wonderful tragedy of "Polyeucte," than which no more beautiful picture of heroism exists. Pauline is true to her husband, though the lover she had abandoned at her father's command and since believed to be dead comes back and storms her heart. Polyeucte's faith triumphs over every natural feeling and in dying he sends for Sévère and confides to him the woman they both love. Finally, Sévère, himself, interposes for the life of his rival with an importunity that is sublime.

In "Polyeucte," "Mort de Pompée," "Cinna," "Horace," etc., Corneille revived the old Roman spirit as to life and its duties. In "Phédre," "Andromaque," "Iphigénie," etc., Racine revived the old Greek spirit as to Art and its influences. It is deeply interesting to contrast the two great poets. "Corneille," some one has said, "formed himself; but Louis XIV., Colbert, Sophocles and Euripides

* The heroism which Corneille painted in words, the great grandchild of his own daughter, Charlotte Corday, painted in action. This is even a more striking and a more interesting case of heredity than that of D'Aubigné and Mme. de Maintenon.

all contributed to form Racine." Hence Racine is not, like Corneille, the exponent of a single phase of character, but ever conscious of the actual life around him, so that, as Wilhelm Meister says, in reading his Plays "we can always figure to ourselves the poet as living at a splendid court, with a great king before his eyes, in constant intercourse with the most distinguished persons, and penetrating into the secrets of human nature as it works behind the gorgeous tapestry of palaces." The French let foreigners praise their other great writers and they, themselves, admire and love them, but they praise Racine alone. Nothing but his faultless phraseology and Attic perspicuity can really satisfy them.

Boldly seizing upon the great themes of Greek Tragedy, Racine gave them a power and a pathos all unknown to the ancients. Yet he is sculpturesque—true to the ideal of perfect simplicity in idea and in expression. His Hippolyte is not as perfect a Sir Galahad as the Hippolyte of Euripides; but his Phédre is a thousand times nobler and more lovable. What can equal her impassioned language when she bursts forth with :

" Yes, prince, I languish, I long for Theseus.
I love him : not such as they in hades have known him,
Fickle adorer of a thousand different objects,
Who goes to disturb the rest of the god of the dead ;
But faithful, but proud, and even a little shy,
Charming, young, drawing all hearts after him,
Such as our gods are painted, or such as I see you,
He had your bearing, your eyes, your language,

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But faithful, but proud, and even a little shy,
Charming, young, drawing all hearts after him,
Such as our gods are painted, or such as I see you,
He had your bearing, your eyes, your language,

That noble modesty adorned his countenance
When he traversed the waves of our Crete,
Worthy subject of the vows of the daughters of Minos."

And again, when suddenly attacked by the keenest jealousy, she exclaims :

" Ah, grief not yet experienced !
For what new torments am I reserved !
All that I have suffered, my fears, my transports,
The ardor of my desires, the horror of my remorse,
Even the insupportable injury of a cruel contempt
Was only a feeble attempt at the torment that I endure."

Equally pathetic, but far purer and loftier are the sufferings of Berenice and Andromaque, but it was not until Racine devoted his perfect Art to the illustration of sacred themes that he attained the zenith of his fame and the climax of that Art. "Athalie," is the masterpiece of the French stage, perfect in its grand and awful theme, faultless in its wonderful diction and unrivalled in its masterly simplicity. "Esther," written, like "Athalie," at the request of Mme. de Maintenon for the young ladies of St. Cyr, was a much greater success on its appearance, and though since relegated to its proper rank, it remains second only to "Athalie."

The name of Racine suggests that of Boileau, as their friendship, never marred by a single interruption through a long life, is one of the most beautiful things on record. Boileau was introduced to the king at thirty-three years of age. He established himself in Paris and in the Vieux Colombier grouped

around him Molière, Racine, Chapelle and La Fontaine. Before him, criticism as a distinct province in Literature did not exist. He took the stand of literary censor and was not afraid to tell Louis XIV. that though he could judge better of battles, he was not his equal as a critic.

The "Heroes of Romance," a satire upon the Scudéry school, is the best of Boileau's works, though "L'Art Poétique," "Le Lutrin," the Epistles and Satires are yet read for their perfect versification, sound canons of criticism and purity of style. Irreproachable in heart, life and literature, Boileau's will always remain an attractive character, and judged by his own favorite maxim: "Nothing is beautiful but the True," men will always find much to admire in his writings.

In the midst of the great creations which mark this as the golden age of French Literature, the Fables of La Fontaine hold a conspicuous place. The French say, "La Fontaine is the flower of the Gallic mind and its perfume is that of antiquity." It is unnecessary to dwell on those *naïve*, profound, often humorous and often touching apologues which everyone has read and long known by heart.

We turn from the secular writers of the Court (although La Fontaine was not wholly of the Court) to the great ecclesiastics connected with it. The pulpit eloquence of this age is unparalleled. Of the sublime funeral orations of Bossuet, a celebrated critic has said "praise would be profanation." The pure

and gentle Fénelon, proving in his own inimitable way that mildness and persuasion are the most powerful arms of spiritual warfare; the Jesuit Bourdaloue, a master of dialectics; Massilon, the Racine of the French pulpit; the great Protestants, Jurieu, Claude, and Saurien; Mascaron, to whom Louis said: "Nothing but your eloquence can defy the ravages of time;" and Fléchier, who vanquished Mascaron in the funeral oration of Turenne, clothed the gift of speech with unprecedented power.

But of all the great orators, Bossuet was, undoubtedly the greatest. Abbé Maury says: "Read his discourses; and if you are not impressed by the sublimity of his thoughts and the vehemence of his emotions, take care never to exercise any judgment in regard to orators; nature has refused you the appreciation of eloquence."

The sermons entitled "The Unity of the Church;" "The Worship due to God;" "Brotherly Love" and "Human Judgments" are among the finest, and the following passages fairly represent Bossuet's style:

"Whence think you that Jesus Christ will summon the flames to devour ungrateful Christians? From his altars, from his sacraments, from his wounds, from that side opened on the Cross to be a source of infinite love to us. Thence will come the indignation of his just wrath, so much the more implacable as it will have been steeped in the very source of his mercy."

"The discourse of St. Paul, very far from flowing

with that tempered equality which we admire in orators, appears unequal and without connection to those who have not sufficiently penetrated it ; and the delicate of the earth, who have, they say, sensitive ears, are offended by the harshness of his irregular style. But, my brethren, let us not blush for it ; the language of the apostle is simple, but his thoughts are all divine. If he ignores rhetoric, if he despises Philosophy, Jesus Christ holds with him the place of everything ; and his name, which he has always on his lips, his mysteries, which he treats of divinely, render his simplicity all-powerful. He will go, this ignoramus in the art of smooth speaking, with that rude locution, with that phraseology which betokens the foreigner, he will go into that polished Greece, mother of philosophers and orators ; in spite of the resistance of the world he will establish there more churches than Plato gained disciples ; he will preach Jesus Christ in Athens and the wisest of its senators will pass from the areopagus into the school of this barbarian. He will extend still farther his conquests ; in the person of a proconsul he will bring down to the feet of the Saviour the majesty of the Roman *fascēs*, he will make the judges before whom he is cited tremble in their tribunals : Rome, itself, will hear his voice, and one day that city, mistress of the world, will hold herself far more honored by a letter in the style of Paul addressed to her citizens than by the many famous harangues she heard from her own Cicero."

The great Fénelon will always be remembered as the preceptor of the young Duke of Burgundy, and in this capacity as the author of that unique work, "The Adventures of Telemachus," which is "neither a poem, nor a history, nor a romance, nor a moral treatise, and yet is all of these combined;" and as the invincible friend and staunch defender of Mme. de Guyon.

The perfect fearlessness which marks the French character renders anything like a compromise in morals and religion an impossibility. "The French," says Heine, "attack every problem in its essential point and do not rest until they solve it or set it aside as insolvable." This has led, of course, to the most brilliant and the most deplorable results. It has made the French the teachers of the world, because other nations can profit by their suggestions, while they feel no temptation to go to the same extremes. Thus the world has been an almost infinite gainer by the life and teaching of Mme. Guyon, while it shrinks from both the example and the inculcation. The words of that devout genius are on our lips in Hymns of Praise, and the fact that such a life has been lived is a perpetual reproach to those who content themselves with a lower standard whether in the one case we know it or not, and in the other we acknowledge it or not. But, for all this, the French themselves are the losers. That impetuosity of character which condemned Fénelon to exile and Mme. Guyon to imprisonment swept

into oblivion the glorious gifts, which I, for one, cannot but believe were conferred "to be traded upon with interest."

This vehemence of nature displayed itself in the same way, though to far greater advantage, in the illustrious advocates of Jansenism. Of the many great names identified with that famous religious reformation which has left its impress upon every province of thought, those of Jacqueline and Blaise Pascal remain the most notable.

It is impossible to conceive of a more brilliant career than that which opened before the beautiful, gifted Jacqueline Pascal. At the age of eleven years, with some young friends she had composed and acted a Play in five acts which was the theme of conversation in Paris for many months. At fourteen she carried away a poetical prize contended for by some of the greatest poets of France. Coming under the influence of the Port Royalists, her sensitive, enthusiastic, impetuous nature boldly abandoned itself to their guidance, and at the age of twenty-one, renouncing genius, fame, and every earthly enjoyment, she entered upon a life of sublime austerity and complete self-sacrifice, dead to the world, and satisfied with nothing but perfection. But her genius could not be suppressed. In her Meditations, Letters and Religious Poems, above all, in her last eloquent remonstrance against the signing of the fatal formula that was to save Port Royal, by repudiating the doctrine bound up with its exist-

ence, that genius glows and burns with an intensity that is unearthly. Led by the authority of Arnauld, the Jansenists broke their vows; but Jacqueline Pascal died of grief and remorse, in the terrible fear that in order to save Port Royal she had lost her own soul.

The story of her life does not end here; its influence over the marvellous mind of her brother is its chief glory. The world has never known a more penetrating intellect than Pascal's. All who have studied it feel that in Physical Science, in Mathematics and in Metaphysics there is no height which he might not have attained. Like his sister, he renounced everything for religion. The Jansenists found in Pascal a powerful ally, and his "Provincial Letters," which expose the casuistry of the Jesuits, will ever remain the great trophy of their school of thought.

But it is in his "Pensées," the mere fragment of a work cut short by death, that his fiery eloquence, his remorseless logic and the keenness of his penetrating intellect find full scope. His design was to prove that all that is weak in man belongs to man, all that is good to God; in other words, the Jansenist doctrine of the perfect helplessness of man and the perfect efficacy of Divine Grace. The latter portion of this task was unfulfilled; hence the awful irony, the mournful disgust, the horrible *ennui*, the self-hatred, the iron despotism of the "Pensées." Those who know nothing of the design of the work

and the ultimate drift of these first principles imagine that this is the scepticism which springs from doubt, whereas it is an exquisite mockery of such scepticism. This intensity of thought concentrated upon man's eternal destiny is the most painful thing in the world. To deliberately resolve to concentrate one's thoughts upon the darkest view of man that can be taken betokens a strength of mind which few can understand, much less acquire. Pascal has done it once for all. There remains nothing to be done in this direction. I give a specimen of his style in the following quotation :

“The nature of self-love and of this human *me* is to love and consider itself only. But what will it do? It cannot prevent this beloved object from being full of faults and miseries; it wishes to be great and sees that it is little; it wishes to be happy and sees itself miserable; it wishes to be perfect and sees that it is full of imperfections; it wishes to be the object of men's love and esteem and sees that its faults deserve only their aversion and contempt. This embarrassment in which man finds himself produces in him the most unjust and the most criminal passion that it is possible to imagine: for he conceives a mortal hatred for that truth which condemns him and convinces him of his faults. He would like to annihilate it, and not being able to destroy it in itself, he destroys it as much as he can in his judgment and in that of others; that is to say, he takes every care to cover up his faults both

from others and from himself, and cannot endure others to make him see them, or themselves to see them. * * * * There are different degrees in this aversion for the truth ; but all have it in some degree, for it is inseparable from self-love. It is this false delicacy which obliges those who are compelled to reprove others to choose so many evasions and modifications to avoid shocking them. They find it necessary to diminish our faults, to make a show of excusing them, to mix in praises and testimonies of affection and esteem. With all this, this medicine does not cease to be bitter to self-love. It takes as little as possible, and always with disgust, and often with a secret spite against those who offer it. The result is, if any one desires to be beloved, he takes care not to perform an office known to be disagreeable to us : we are treated as we wish to be ; we hate the truth, it is concealed from us ; we wish to be flattered, people flatter us ; we like to be deceived, they deceive us. So it is that each degree of good fortune which elevates us in the world removes us more from the truth, because one fears more to wound those whose affection is more useful and whose aversion is more dangerous. A prince might be the fable of all Europe, and he alone know nothing of it.* * * * Thus human life is but a perpetual illusion ; we do nothing but deceive and flatter each other. No one speaks of us in our presence as he speaks in our absence. The union between men is only founded on this mutual decep-

tion ; and few friendships would subsist if each knew what his friend says of him when he is absent, although he speaks then sincerely and without passion."

Now without bearing in mind the principle upon which all this is to turn, it would be simply intolerable. I have often encountered the most absurd misconceptions of the "*Pensées*," doing away with all their grandeur ; take away this sublime irony, this "scorn of scorn and hate of hate," and you destroy their very essence. Every member of the Pascal family seems to have shared this burning zeal. That was pride indeed, pure and inexorable, which Mlle. Périer, Pascal's niece, felt in being able to say : "All my relatives have died in the service of God and in the love of truth."

In passing from the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Century, from Boileau to Voltaire, we encounter Jean Baptiste Rousseau, the first great lyric poet of France. In his exquisite Odes "To Fortune," "To Chaulieu," "To De la Fare," "On the Death of Conti," and "To Posterity," we find charms hitherto unrevealed in any language,—a delicacy, transparency and suavity which are altogether fascinating.

I shall pass over the great transition writers, La Motte, Fontenelle, Lesage and Montesquieu, in order to devote more time to the still greater inaugurators of Modern Literature.

The names of Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau—once war cries of such mighty import—have

long ceased to excite a throb of that interest which agitated and convulsed Europe; as moralists, publicists, socialists and teachers of Natural Religion they are almost as effete as if they had not existed, but in Literature they will always be immortal.

One prejudiced on every side against Voltaire and indoctrinated with a miserable feeling of obligation to condemn his writings will be most agreeably disappointed in judging and knowing them for himself. "Merope" is one of the most beautiful Tragedies ever written. It turns upon the conflict of Merope, widow of Cresphonte, King of Messina, in deciding whether she shall stoop to marry Polyphonte, tyrant of Messina, in order to secure the throne for her son, Egisthe, who has been an exile for fifteen years, or be true to herself and noble lineage and trust that the time may come in which Egisthe shall reign in his own right. Her hatred of marrying a man whom she despises is like that of the Danaidæ in the "Suppliants" of Eschylus. Indeed this tragedy is more truly Greek than any that Racine ever wrote. Every emotion is intellectualized. The most exciting portion of the Play is *recited*, not acted out before the audience. It is on the heroic order. Merope is a noble, magnificent woman, tenderness for husband and son predominating over everything and stifling the ambition which would naturally belong to a nature so splendidly endowed as hers. Occasional sentences have the force of aphorisms.

"In order to avenge one's self, it is necessary to know how to suffer."

"He knew misfortune in opening his eyelids, and the gods have conducted him to immortality."

"The vilest and least enlightened testimony sometimes reveals great truths"—a principle very frequently acted upon by subsequent writers.

And in the noble lines of *Egisthe* which close this exalted tragedy—

"It is not mine,
This glory belongs to the gods,
Virtue, as well as happiness, comes from them."—

a worthy seal is set to its beauty.

In his "*Century of Louis XIV.*"—rather an Historical Essay than a History—Voltaire gives us one of the most brilliant, sparkling, animated and refreshing compositions ever penned. We may not agree with him in many of his estimates, for he "blushes for his predilections for Jansenism," slights *Mme. de Longueville* and unequivocally condemns *Mme. de Guyon*, but Voltaire is not dogmatic—we feel at liberty to disagree with him.

In Rousseau, still more than in Voltaire, we begin to discern that striking inequality in the different powers of the mind, that glaring disproportion between intellect and character which is detected and condemned only by the reader of to-day. Rousseau is Emerson's representative man, of whom everything may be at the same time affirmed and denied. By his eloquence alone he lives. In the

midst of much nonsense ; sheer vanity ; possibly, sincere gropings after Truth ; we suddenly come upon some statement which has the force of a Revelation. The morbid sentimentality of Rousseau was only an exaggerated expression of the melancholy which afflicted thoughtful and poetical minds throughout Europe, engendered by the social and political upheavals preceding and pending the Revolution—the thunder and lightning of the storm which was to issue in the purification and clarification of the atmosphere. The “Paul and Virginia” of Bernardine de St. Pierre, set to the same sentimental strain and aiming to reveal the superiority of the natural over the artificial emotions, has long eclipsed the glory of “The New Heloise.”

It is refreshing to turn from the feverish sentiment of such writers to the elevated discussions of a Thomas or a Vauvenargues. The latter is a companion from whom one refuses to be separated. He restores that tranquillity of mind which we lost in leaving the Great Century. The “Introduction to a Knowledge of the Human Mind” is instructive as well as original and striking. Speaking of judgment and penetration, Vauvenargues says : “Nothing is so useful to both as breadth of mind. It spreads light over great objects and over a vast surface. It is impossible to have great genius without intellectual breadth. No one can be ignorant that this quality depends greatly on the soul, which

generally gives the mind its own limits, and restricts or extends it according to its own flight."

He says that the French have put delicacy, which comes essentially from the soul, at a higher value than any other people in the world. Again: "There is an eloquence which is in the words, and which consists in easily and suitably expressing one's thoughts, of whatever nature they may be; this is the eloquence of the world. There is another, residing in the ideas and feelings themselves, joined to that of expression; this is the true eloquence." A literary man may be pardoned and even loved for asserting that "No one can have a great soul or a penetrating mind without some passion for letters."

Vauvenargues' criticism of Corneille is very severe. He accuses him of ostentation and mere declamation, of being, perhaps, a painter of great characters, but a weak delineator and a false colorist. For Racine he is all enthusiasm, not hesitating to affirm that he is the greatest genius France ever had and the most eloquent of her poets. As the personal friend of Voltaire we are impressed by the brilliant portrait he gives us. "There is no essential merit that one cannot find in his writings," he tells us: "he is not only a writer of the first order, but a sublime genius which divines the connection of human affairs from afar; the possessor of a mind superior to prejudices, and which joined to the philosophical knowledge of his own century the

knowledge of past centuries and the whole economy of the human race."

We shall not dwell upon the Literature of the Revolution, so enthusiastically criticised by Vinet and Gérusez; it is a world in itself and a subject upon which, as M. Guizot says "one cannot touch without emotion." Of this period Mme. de Staël is the one great writer whose works will be coëval with the human race. It was she who made the world know and love Germany and her glorious writers. The magnificent tribute which the illustrious exile paid to the country among whose *savants*, philosophers and poets she found refuge, created an era in Art, Literature and Philosophy. In studying this great work we do not wonder that Mme de Staël was the one person whom Napoleon feared. The energy of her thoughts, the strength of her opinions, the enthusiasm of her feelings reveal a nature which, if powerful as an ally, is no less formidable as a foe.

Mme. de Staël is not only the one writer of this period who is not carried away by some emotion or some idea which usurps entire dominion over the mind, she is the only writer in any language who boldly brings her emotions into every discussion of politics, morality and Metaphysics. Her mind is *free*: and whether it be Germany, France, Italy, or England that she scans, we feel assured that her conclusions are the result of an observation that is rigorously exact in its conscientiousness and scrupulously

impartial in its judgments. A nature so richly endowed could not but, itself, inform the works brought forward for criticism : hence the grandeur of the Drama in her hands. But it is in treating of Metaphysics that her comprehensive grasp of Truth is best revealed and studied. We are not surprised to find her an ardent advocate of *à priori* Philosophy, and surely nothing can exceed the energy and beauty of her thoughts on this subject. In discussing the Kantian school she says :

“The grandest epochs of the human race, in all time, have been those in which truths of a certain order were never contested, either by writings or by discourse. The passions might lead to guilty acts, but no one called in question the religion which he did not obey. Sophisms of every kind, the abuse of a certain Philosophy, have destroyed in different countries and in different centuries this noble firmness of belief, the source of heroic devotion. Is it not, then, a beautiful idea for philosophy to forbid the very science it professes, the entrance of the sanctuary, and to employ every kind of abstraction to prove that there are regions from which it ought to be banished ? Despots and fanatics have tried to forbid human reason the examination of certain subjects, and the reason has always freed itself from these restraints. But the limits which it imposes upon itself, far from subjecting it, give it new strength—a result which always follows from the authority of laws freely consented to by those who submit themselves to them.”

"Corinne" is a work of Art in which all the Fine Arts have a part. M. Vinet says it is explained by St. Paul when he says : "Though the more I love, the less I be loved,"—a principle which he considers the most tragic thing in life, and which I should consider totally destructive of faith in the emotions. This noble work is deeply impregnated with the injustices which Mme. de Staël suffered as a woman. This to M. Vinet is not a subject of regret, for to the sneering statement that "No woman has written an Iliad," he is ready with the reply, "Neither has any man written a 'Corinne.'"

If Chateaubriand is not to be named by the side of Mme. de Staël as a teacher of profound truth, an eloquent moralist or a touching painter of the human heart, his claims to the admiration of posterity are, still, dazzling. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a more beautiful work than his "Genius of Christianity." His style is eloquence itself, and seldom is that style alone impressive. He was the first to show what Poetry and the Modern Arts owe to the Christian religion, and his work will always remain a beautiful tribute to the teachings of that Church which has exercised undisputed sway over Southern Europe. If Chateaubriand awakens a less purely intellectual admiration than Mme. de Staël, all the more does he arouse our sympathies for the weaknesses, inconsistencies and inequalities of nature which we share with him. "Man," says Vinet, "reveals himself more by his sentiments than by his

thoughts," and this subjective element predominates in all that Chateaubriand has written. Much of "Atala" may fade from memory, but "Le Dernier Abencérage" will ever remain an ideal work as to the capacities and ends of romance.

Our own age has seen poems, *contes*, novels, romances, fictitious memoirs and genuine memoirs, comedies, *livres d'agrément*, histories, essays and sketches heaped upon it by France, with a prodigality unequaled in any other country. Lovers of fiction have been carried away by the modern French novel, and so widely have they extended its spell, that to many this is the one department in all French Literature, the representative exposition of the French genius, which in being condemned by the very people who read no other kind of Literature in its turn condemns all the Literature of this great people. To one who cares little for any kind of fiction, French fiction is distasteful as well as objectionable. The French intellect is not less exact and remorseless in its dissection of the passions than in its analysis of abstract ideas: but in the case of the passions this method is at fault; it is morbid, enervating and vicious. But Balzac, Sue, George Sand, Dumas *père et fils* have conferred a benefit upon the world in so speedily attaining the limit of this method. Passionate reaction is inevitable, and, in the mean time we have had some eloquent warnings as to the workings of the human heart and its violent abuse of the imagination.

The sentimentalism of St. Pierre and Rousseau has been taken up and perfected by Lamartine both as a poet and a novelist. In "Jocelyn," "Graziella," and "Raphael," we have the *ne plus ultra* of emotion, and, as summer idyls for those whose emotions need vivifying, nothing more delightful can be imagined.

French Poetry has had marvelous accessions within the last half-century. Béranger, De Musset, Victor Hugo and many others have given us perfect poems. Béranger, the people's poet, who "had neither wealth, rank, nor glory, but much, much love," must be read and re-read if one would know contemporary France, that France of which he proudly writes :

"Thou mayst fall, but it is like the thunder-bolt,
Which rises again and reverberates in the highest
heavens."

Victor Hugo, like Lamartine and Chateaubriand, is as much a poet in prose as in verse : a wildly luxuriant genius, an exuberant nature, a splendid intellect and a mighty heart—seldom has a human being been so magnificently endowed. That great work "Les Misérables" will live when marble crumbles into dust. In the opinion of those not given to enthusiasm it comes right after the Gospel Narrative in the loftiness of its teaching, the standard of its heroism and the sublimity of its delineations. If we have glaring extravagance, incon-

sistency, disproportion and exaggeration in this unique work, let us console ourselves with the recollection that without the faults we could not have had the excellencies. "Notre Dame de Paris," Hugo's masterpiece, is a study of Art rather than of man; but as such it is unrivalled in its grandeur, and a glowing testimony to the mental power which can subordinate the personal to the impersonal, the concrete to the abstract.

Saintine, DeVigny, Souvestre, Sandeau, Feuillet, Erckman-Chatrian and Cherbuliez have given us charming novels,—stories in which the real and the ideal unite to illustrate the Truth.

But it is neither in Poetry or Fiction that the French genius has shown itself unrivalled in our day. In History, Philosophy, Criticism, Belles-Lettres and Journalism it finds its true sphere and astonishes the world. Its long list of brilliant historians,—D'Aubigné, Lamartine, Guizot, Amidée, Thierry, Auguste Thierry, Thiers, Michelet, Mignet, Duruy, Louis Blanc and many lesser lights—would alone render our century forever illustrious.

In Philosophy M. Cousin has developed *à priori* Truth to its utmost limits, leaving, as even Mill acknowledges, nothing to be desired, and this in a style which can be likened only to Plato's. And Cousin is scarcely less fascinating as a Critic than as a Philosopher. His Biographical and Literary "Studies" furnish us not only with the soundest information, but guide us to conclusions based upon

the noblest principles and charm us by an inimitably brilliant style and an inexhaustible enthusiasm. No one who loves generosity of character can fail to love the French character. If "the truest mark of being born with great qualities is to be born without envy," then Cousin was one of the greatest men earth has known. That indefatigable research which has issued in the only grand monument to its fame of which any country can boast—an unbroken series of critical studies—was founded upon a generous desire to bring to light all that was worthy and creditable in the past, no matter how much it differed from prevailing thought and feeling. The same generosity is seen in the encouragement and praise given always and without stint to the intellectual work of women. Without that spirit we should not have had those brilliant works themselves, nor the emphatic testimonies which the critics have rendered. With unerring precision M. Cousin strikes at the very heart of the discussion of the limits to be placed to the intellectual education of women. He says: "Man and woman have the same soul, the same moral destiny; the same account will be demanded of them for the employment of their faculties, and it is a barbarity for man and an opprobrium for woman to degrade or allow others to degrade the talents which God has given her. Ought not women to know their religion if they wish to practice it as intelligent and free beings? And since religious instruction is not only permitted to

them, but commanded, what kind of instruction, I ask, can be too elevated for them?"

Ste. Beuve, whom a popular American critic calls "the very genius of observation, discretion and taste," was even more ardent as a critic than Cousin. His "*Causeries du Lundi*" show us the limits of psychological analysis, and are models of a grand erudition completely subordinated to the power to entertain and enliven.

But the greatest of all critics—who has known how to combine labor, enthusiasm and brilliancy of style with a fully rounded, well defined Philosophical theory—is Hippolyte Adolphe Taine. This theory is, to be sure, capable of great abuse, but if one is able to contemplate it as an abstraction, it throws an almost dazzling light upon all History, Literature and Art, and creates a new world for the student. This theory of the triumph of environment over individuality is just as false as it is true and just as true as it is false: but Taine's point of view happens to be the one which mankind has not yet taken; it is fresh, new, startling, and delightful from its very novelty. His "*History of English Literature*" is altogether fascinating, but not altogether fair. He greatly underestimates Milton, Dryden, and Pope, and imagines that the English place a stress upon the Literature of Charles II. which no Englishman ever dreamed of placing this Literature being absolutely unknown to the mass of English readers.

I ought not to pass over in silence the critics who have been my guides in taking up this study. St. Marc Girardin, Roche, Moland, Mennechet G  ruzez, Sismondi, Vinet, etc., initiate one into the mysteries of French Literature with such tact that a task becomes a recreation.

But of all the departments of Literature peculiar to the French and unknown to other nations, that of pure Literature itself is the most remarkable. When writing can take the place of conversation, and when that conversation is not at all didactic, but simply stimulating, vivacious and enjoyable, Literary art has reached its climax. We have in our language on both sides of the sea so little humor, such a dearth of wit, that we know nothing of the exquisite mental pleasure excited by such means. The English, and especially the American, mind must go through a course of training in order to appreciate the delicacy of this instrument in the hands of a Frenchman. In such writings as those of Alphonse Daudet ("Lettres de mon Moulin"), Xavier de Maistre ("Voyage autour de ma chambre"), Alphonse Karr ("Promenades hors de mon Jardin"), and Edmond About ("Le Roi des Montagnes"; "Gr  ce Contemporaine"), one may realize all the piquancy, grace, and charm of that intellectual converse which in its *viva voce* form is wholly beyond the reach of those who must live in obscurity.

Among the celebrated women of the Nineteenth Century who have cared to adopt Literature as a

profession we find Mme. Reybaud, Mme. Tastu, Mme. Segalas, Louise Colet, Comtesse d'Agoult, Mme. de Charnacé, Louise Baden, the Princesses De Belgiojoso and Dora D'Istria, Mme. Blanchecotte, Comtesse Dash, Comtesse de Gasparin, and Mme. Judith Mendes. Still more celebrated is Mme. de Girardin, one of the greatest Journalists of modern times, successful also as a dramatist; the intimate friend of Lamartine and Rachelle, and the subject of a charming sketch by Imbert de St. Amande, who forever does away with the idea that women do not enjoy a public life and the work which brings them before the world.

The Memoirs of the world-renowned artist, Mme. Vigée Le Brun, constitute one of the most delightful and valuable contributions to the History of our own times. The painter of six hundred portraits, fifteen fancy scenes, and four hundred landscapes, an indefatigable traveler and the honored guest of many foreign courts, this gifted woman still found time to give the world a clear, vivacious, instructive account of her eventful career.

Among memorable instances of a successful union of fame with domestic happiness, that of Caroline and Juste Olivier stands conspicuous. The former, born in the fields, was ambitious of distinction, the latter, born in the mountains, sang for the pleasure of singing. But in coming together each seems to have supplied the other's want, and in the "Two

Voices " there is but one strain, ringing with religion, patriotism and love of progress.

Having familiarized himself with the glowing imagery, the dazzling brilliancy and the intense subjectivity of the great romanticists, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Victor Hugo and his followers, writers who always have before them the beauty rather than the truth of Christianity, a fresh surprise is in store for the reader who comes upon the great pleaders for Protestantism, Edmond Schérer, Vinet, Monod, Pressensé, the Coquerels, father and two sons, and Roseeuw St. Hilaire. An austere simplicity in language, a profundity in thought and an absolute sincerity in moral conviction render these writers, in my opinion, the greatest that France has known. Other writers answer the demands made by some parts of our being, but these respond to every noble aspiration. While the darkened intellect is enlightened, the corrupt heart is purified and the weak will strengthened, and the highest office which man can perform for his brother is fulfilled.

In bringing to a close a sketch of this kind, some words of explanation must necessarily be made. I have not attempted to do more than offer suggestions. I have purposely avoided the mention of the long list of eminent scientists for which France is famous. I have left unnoticed entire departments of Literature, as the Memoir, the Tale, the Modern Drama ; in short, I have conscientiously adhered to the self-prescribed rule of naming only such writers and such works as

I, myself, have studied ; and again, I have omitted many names of men and books with which I am well acquainted, in the fear of wearying by too great prolixity. Of course I do not wish any one to understand that the French critics whom I have followed deal only in praises. They are just, discriminating and systematically severe. But my object is unlike theirs. I am tired of the widely prevailing ignorance of all that is good and pure in French Literature ; and where I could not praise I have preferred to keep silence, so that my well-informed reader will appreciate my disapprobation quite as well as my approval ; while the tyro who has heard of nothing but the French novel, and of that nothing but abuse, will find that there is something else to think about.

Chateaubriand wrote an "Essay on English Literature," in which the translations are rather discouraging to the student of a foreign Literature ; for instance, "Adam stood blank," becomes "Adam devint blanc ;" the "brook which flowed *fast by* the oracle of God," according to Chateaubriand, flowed "rapidement près ;" the phrase "stood at my head a dream," is metamorphosed into : "à ma tête se tint un songe." Roche says one year does not suffice for the study of all that a people has written during eight hundred years. Of my translations, I will only say that they are as faithful as it seemed possible to make them. But no language can suffer more by translation than the French,—a fact witnessed to perpetually by the adoption of count

less French phrases into all languages. Under no circumstances, however, should we allow ourselves to be absorbed in the external attractions of this great Literature, altogether charming and alluring though they be. It is necessary to penetrate even beyond the semblance of the exoteric significance so inevitably associated with those attractions. The aim and object of French Literature is not to please, but to instruct; not to delight the fancy, but to train the reasoning faculty; not to excite the feelings, but to sound the intellect. The French do not live to read,—to dream, speculate or sigh; they read to live, to know all that is in human life and to enrich the consciousness by this universal knowledge. Hence we find that “nowhere has Literature had as much efficacy as in France,” to quote the words of one of her most eloquent writers, “nowhere has it had as much perseverance. For nearly five hundred years, from the Trouvères to Voltaire, French Literature labored to renovate civilization, and, in spite of the vicissitudes of fate, it has gloriously accomplished its work. Let History come forward to judge it, let its detractors appear to accuse it, it will show what it has done; it will show liberty given as a patrimony to France and as an example to the universe.”



GENIUS AND RELIGION.

GENIUS is the grand generic name men give to intellectual power. That significant word "force," which is causing so much debate among the scientists of to-day, forms the keystone to one of the profoundest conceptions that can agitate the soul. Materialists, baffled by the Force of forces, may well tremble for their theories as long as there exists such a reality as genius; for while its subtle power is so preeminently spiritual as to defy definition, its effects are too substantial to be denied by the rashest.

Genius symbolizes creative energy. And whenever or wherever the God-like gift manifests itself, men bow before it "as the sheaves of the eleven before that of Joseph." Narrow and grovelling indeed must be the soul that has never enthroned a genius. The deathless aspiration after glory, the pride of family, the soul-swelling consciousness of noble blood—what are they but witnesses to the universal homage men render to its sovereignty?

We seek in vain for words to express our delight in that power which extends the sphere of thought, inspires and quickens the flight of the imagination,

deepens the capacity for feeling, endows all who come within the radii of its circle with new faculties, invests life itself with an undreamed-of charm,—unveils an ideal world—and does all this in virtue of the very humanity which we ourselves share with it.

A delight in Nature is sometimes contrasted with an enthusiasm for genius, the life of the universe with the life of thought. Such an antithesis does not exist. Nature is loved by the self-poised character. Its charm is addressed to the thought and feeling already at work within the soul: it does not create new thoughts, new feelings. The animal, the boor, the peasant see with the visual organ the same natural objects which the educated man sees; to them those objects have absolutely no meaning; to the man of mind they not only have a meaning, but a special meaning. Children of precocious intelligence and the keenest sensibilities, who will listen by the hour to anything in the shape of a story, are totally indifferent to the aspects of Nature. The English say that their tourists, less than two hundred years ago, were the first persons in the world to discover that Mont Blanc was a fine spectacle, and that it was worth while to visit Chamounix. We can always detect in those who know that they really do love Nature (Wordsworth heading the list) an element of the most invincible pride. In short, when you love Nature, you *are* educated. You have partaken of the life of genius, you have thought and felt

about something more than the cares and pleasures of this earthly existence. "Thanatopsis," is generally considered a glowing tribute to the power of "Nature's teachings." It is, rather, a striking testimony to the triumph of mind over matter. While the poet allows that Nature has a language of her own, he takes care to state that it is one which is totally dependent upon the moods of man. She has a voice of gladness for his gayer hours, and glides into his darker musings with a mild and healing sympathy. "When thoughts come," *then* "go forth,"—the order of suggestion is as unmistakable as anything could well be. Critics have said, "Why, this is paganism!" forgetting that it only claims to be thought informing Nature, when Nature is the sole object of thought. This principle reaches its perfection in the Bible. No book in the world is so full of references to Natural objects and influences. The most transient, as well as the sublimest and most lasting of Nature's powers are noticed, and in every case for the purpose of showing man's power to make Nature sympathize with him,—not to lose himself in Nature's grandeur,—not to marvel that Nature's laws can be broken for his benefit—but to realize that the soul is greater than the clod; that the created is made for the Creator.

But there is another aspect in which men view an admiration for genius. They distrust it, because they believe that genius, itself, is only a kind of human self-illumination, and, therefore, an admira-

tion for it must be based upon intellectual pride : so that while all recognize the might and majesty of transcendent mental power, many do so under protest, feeling that they are not justified even in acknowledging the recognition. This deplorable misapprehension goes still further. It calls upon us to confess that genius has shipwrecked many lives. It points to such men as Burns, Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Paine, Voltaire, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Emerson, and asks : Can any doubt—now that the details of their lives have been spread before us—that each of these suffered a moral conflict in proportion to his genius?

By still more sinister means, though on very different grounds, a false estimate is put upon the significance and intent of genius. I mean by the dissemination of false ideas in regard to religion and its sacred claims. By hinting that religion is the refuge of weak and uncultivated minds, and by narrowing its claims to the performance of sectarian duties, the idea is excited that there is something in the very conception of any system of faith and worship which is inherently repulsive to the self-sufficient power we call genius.

Laying aside preconceived ideas, let us resort to the testimony of History on this subject.

The most spontaneous burst of genius that the world has ever known was that of the Greeks. And does it not almost startle one to find that in Art, in the Drama, in Politics and in Philosophy,

their one theme was religion? Ignorant of the true God, their deification of nature was the purest, noblest, most refined of all Mythologies. The idols of the Greeks have been the models of ideal beauty for more than two thousand years. To their inquiring, restless, eager minds the heavens declared the glory of unseen *persons*, day unto day showed forth knowledge, and night unto night uttered speech. It is not as an inference, a mere metaphysical speculation, to point a moral or adorn a tale, that we hear of religion among the Greeks. Their genius but rears a superstructure, the whole foundation of which is religion. The grand and gloomy Tragedies of Eschylus, which the labors of Müller, Schlegel, Symonds, Plumptre, Buckley and Swanwick* have now put within the reach of the average scholar, turn entirely upon the conflict between the awful power of retributive justice and human freedom. Full of profound significance, they stirred the nation's inmost soul. The Titans, symbolizing the dark and mysterious powers of nature; the younger gods, embodying all that enters into psychical consciousness; and the furies, denoting that self-condemning divinity, the conscience, make the "Agamemnon," the "Eumenides" and the "Prometheus Bound" works of far more than mere literary value, as they breathe forth the unanswerable cry, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

* The translation by Anna Swanwick is the only metrical translation of Eschylus in English.

Speculations as to the true meaning of "Prometheus in Chains" are endless. It is the representation of constancy under suffering, and that the never-ending suffering of a god. It is the idea of a self-devoting divinity, in dim foreboding of the true religion. It is the mystery of being thwarted, despised, forsaken in the noblest endeavors and the loftiest projects: Prometheus is punished for the benefit he confers. Again, he confers a benefit, we say, but it is a gift which may be abused just as fatally as it may be used effectually. Finally, this wonderful Drama contains a prophecy of the dethronement of that Power which, when wielded for the sake of Power, is synonymous with Evil. Whatever we make of all this, we cannot deny its profound religious significance.

Not only does Eschylus recognize a mysterious spiritual nature in man and a cosmic Spiritual Power opposed to man's self-will: we find in his works a faith, a reverence for the gods and a piety which are marvelous.

"A dread adversary is he that reveres the gods."

"For mortals to succeed is a boon of the deity."

"There is no bulwark in wealth against destruction to the man, who, in the wantonness of his heart, has spurned the great altar of Justice."

"To be free from evil thoughts is God's best gift."

[BUCKLEY'S Translation.

Eschylus does not hesitate to teach that the gods act upon principles which man cannot comprehend.

His fatalism, at the point of its greatest gloom, is one from without, never the modern idea of a fatalism from within. We do not wonder that mere men could not act the Tragedies of Eschylus : that they called for the cothurnus, the buskin and the mask. They are grand in that they dare to touch upon the Infinite, and if, as a genius in our own day has declared, Eschylus is the test of the understanding, he is not less so in the demands he makes upon its spiritual capacity than in those upon its purely intellectual powers.

The discussions and dialectics of Socrates and Plato have engrossed the attention of all subsequent thinkers. They seem to possess a magnetism unknown to other philosophers. What is the meaning of this ? It is safe to say, no mere man ever exceeded Socrates in the sincerity of his search for Truth *in order to practise it*. Plato, in elaborating his longings, gropings, yearnings for a true basis of religion, his indignant repudiation of the gross materialism that closed him in on every side, his sweeping denunciation of worldliness and worldly principles of action, is identified with his great teacher even in the character of martyr. In the earlier stages of examination and study, one is tempted to wonder how the learned world can so magnanimously overlook the many painfully childish, foolish, ridiculous notions entertained by the great sage. Not only the doctrine of Pre-existence, (which has a side so utterly inane, profitless and

intolerable, that it is hard to see how any strong mind can want to contemplate it) but the belief in the invasion of the Amazons, in the existence of such beings as centaurs, chimerae, cyclopes, in myths resting upon the fiction of descent from a god, the laws laid down for the most unmitigated despotism in political government, and the theories worse than despotic and inconsistent in regard to property and marriage are, from a perfectly practical, rationalistic stand-point, absurd in the extreme. It is only in fixing the attention upon the poetic, creative, religious side of Plato's ideas that we find any explanation of their greatness, any mode of accounting for their position before the world. The mighty task which he set himself—of showing how archetypal and immutable ideas are to be substituted for the shifting phenomena of sense—was for the avowed purpose of proving the Immortality of the soul and the supreme majesty of Virtue. Plato is the prince of enthusiasts, and it is through his deep feeling and ardent longing that he has so powerfully impressed mankind.

Homer, so universally regarded as the fountain-head of Poetry, Art, Grecian Mythology and classic lore, is not easily ranked in any category. John Foster, one of the most powerful writers in all English Literature, in examining the moral and religious tone of Homer brands it as "revolting," "utterly atrocious," "purely horrid." But the religious tone of Homer is not more unlike that of

Christianity than the political tone is unlike modern conceptions of government, or than the ideas of physical superiority, domestic happiness and æsthetic culture are foreign to our present ideas. As moral guides the Homeric Greeks had only utility, appropriateness and the sense of the beautiful, and it is in reference only to these that we can speak of any direct teaching. Now the works of genius do not exist to inculcate positive doctrines. It is by their indirect force that they wield so sublime a power. This indirect force in Homer is heroism. And heroism is noble, admirable, lovable. You can look at the darkest side if you choose, you can call the passion of the "Iliad" revenge, vindictiveness, insatiable pride. But it is hard to see how the world could ever understand moral or spiritual heroism unless it first clearly understood physical, animal, visible heroism. War may be an evil in itself, and yet afford occasion for nobler virtues than the world could ever know without it. The English as a nation have been reared on Homer, and you will find vindications, apologies and justifications for war in their writings unequaled in any other Literature. But to whatever discussions this may lead, it cannot be maintained that the English are an irreligious people. Foster's marked individuality compelled him to differ with his countrymen in their admiration for Homer not less than in many other respects. He confers a benefit in pointing out the worst features of the Homeric morality, but he does not suc-

ceed in showing (indeed he does not attempt the task) why it is that none but the Christian world cares for Homer. Why not offer as an explanation (though it may not be the best nor the final one) the fact that Christianity cultivates, expands and elevates the emotions more than any power which has been brought to bear upon humanity? and as the "Iliad" is a poem in which strong feeling carries all before it, it then follows that the Christian scholar will be more alive to its charms than any other.

Passing over the avowedly religious works of Hesiod, the stern recognition of a Divine Power so indelibly impressed upon the page of Xenophon, the beauty and tenderness of Sophocles, who in religious feeling is only a softened Eschylus, let us note the striking fact that intellectual excellence decreases just as irreligion increases. Euripides marks the close of an epoch in religious thought and in the works of genius. His faith in the gods was shaken, and though we exonerate him on the ground that the Grecian gods were unworthy of faith, we must deplore the reflection of this unsettled faith in Tragedy, for it is the death-blow to its grandeur. The spirit of poetry does not accord with such moral dissertations, for instance, as we find in the "Ion" of Euripides, where he says :

"Yet must I blame the god, * * *

* * * * * Do not thou

Act thus ; but, as thy power is great, respect

The virtues ; for whoso'er, of mortal men,

Dares impious deeds, him the gods punish; how
Is it then just that you who gave the laws
To mortals, should yourselves transgress those laws?
If (though it is not thus, yet will I urge
The subject),—if to mortals you shall pay
The penalty of certain crimes, thou,
Neptune, and Jove, that reigns supreme in heaven,
Will leave your temples treasureless by paying
The mulcts of your injustice; for unjust
You are, your pleasures to grave temperance
Preferring: and to men these deeds, no more
Can it be just to charge as crimes, these deeds
If from the gods they imitate; on those
Who gave the ill example falls the charge.”

[POTTER'S Translation.]

Whether Euripides sought to do away with the idea of retributive justice in his dramas, and, indeed, to make this little span of earthly life the theme of absorbing interest, it were hard to tell; but even those who see no connection between intellectual greatness and religion are compelled to acknowledge that after this the Athenian glory wanes.

As for Greek Sculpture, the more deeply we are at first impressed by its exalted and lofty character, the more do we feel our inability to comprehend its underlying principles, or to express in words an admiration which we know to be unintelligent. The beauty that constitutes the charm of this wonderful Art may address itself to the eye and to the feelings at once, but not to the understanding until it has been subjected to the labor of profound thought. As the people who gloried in intellectual

acuteness expressed their keenest perceptions in Sculpture, so the individual who would understand this expression must seek to attain, in a measure, to the same plane of being. But Art is in its very nature sensuous; the expression of ideas must evidently be subordinated to that of beauty, which is the supreme law of its being. Is there, then, such a thing as a standard of beauty and an æsthetic dictum compelling universal assent? We are forced to confess that there is not. Taste is largely the result of education, and the greatest enthusiasts must admit that the appreciation of beauty is neither a necessary nor a universal principle. Nevertheless, for the admirers of Greek Art there are inflexible laws, relentless toward all who refuse obedience to their control. For the beauty which the Greeks adored was not only that of *mind*; it was the mental power of beings deemed superior to man in everything that makes man great. Modern Art (and even that of the Renaissance) yields to the dominion of mere physical charms. Let us observe how subordinate these are in Greek Art. Impersonality is its distinguishing feature. The light of the body is the eye; yet in their statues we find nothing but the opaque, solid socket. Again, for the express purpose of representing *ideal*, not actual, individual beauty, single beautiful features were selected from different bodies and united in one. Still further, the beauties and attributes of both sexes were united in the Hermaphrodites. It

is interesting to note the rules of proportion, symmetry, outline, etc., upon which their works are based. But so far we are only in the outer courts of Art. The absence of coloring (in most cases), of expression either of body or countenance, of passion, of individuality, lift us at once from the concrete into the realm of the abstract. Their intense love of Nature, their endeavor to conform to natural laws, their keen appreciation of the beauty of those laws, which are visible in all their artistic creations, prove that they were not insensible to the power of the visible, the material and the earthly, nor depreciators of physical attractions. But these they regarded as a means, not an end. They perceived the nobleness of the human body; the meaning in the action of the hands and feet; the grandeur of the brow as the seat of the soul. Repose they regarded as the state most appropriate to beauty. Serenity, decorum, propriety, the evidences of a disciplined mind pierced through all external fascinations. Unity, harmony, simplicity form the foundation of their ideas of beauty. These conceptions give man some faint idea of the Infinite. However our minds are limited and bounded by the material universe and our earthly sphere of being, there are moments of elevation in which the human spirit perceives not only its own negative powers, but the positive counterparts of those negations and the attributes that shadow forth Perfection, Happiness, Eternity.

We have noticed the ideas which elevate. Those which delight must not be forgotten. The absence of voluptuousness, wantonness and all sensuality proves that the Greeks had an elevated idea of enjoyment. Here, again, general rather than specific qualities predominate. Their idea of the qualifications necessary to an harmonious existence may be summed up in the words Youth, Strength and Intellectual Freedom. Even the Furies were represented as strong, joyous young virgins. Life was never caricatured; peculiarities and infirmities were not perpetuated; the features were not distorted by pain nor disturbed by passion. "To present the uttermost to the eye," says Lessing, "is to bind the wings of fancy, to compel her, since she cannot soar beyond the impression made on the senses, to employ herself with feebler images, shunning as her limit the visible fulness already expressed." This explains why the Greeks avoided expressing anything essentially transitory. No passing phase of life, no evanescent emotion, be it one of joy or sorrow, no trifling thought or aspiration is represented in their Sculpture. This is the secret of its charm for all peoples and all ages. It is the expression of ideas grandly portraying the vague longings, boundless desires and inexpressible thoughts which are common to the whole human race.

Of course when we now speak of religion, all the pure and sublime morality of the New Testament

confronts us, and it is difficult to abstract the required element. But that "thirst for the living God," of which the inspired poet of Israel sung so eloquently, is the source and spring of all real religious life, and this has made itself felt in the darkest regions of the earth.

We cannot wrest the secret of the individuality of a nation from it any more than that of a person from him, or than we can wrest it from our own being. Who will tell us what made the Jew a Jew, the Greek a Greek, the Roman a Roman? Historians evade this question, for it is evident that here we enter not only upon the supernatural, but peer into the most intensely personal and spiritual elements that go to make up character. Causes are sought in topography, climate and physical agencies, *i.e.*, irresponsible agencies, which are self-contradictory, for if these so powerfully affected the inhabitants of Greece at one period, why had they no effect at other periods? And nothing can be more dissimilar than the destiny and character of the Greeks at different periods. The same indenture of coast, the same variety of surface and coast-land, the same mountain ranges and the same sterile soil are there yet, but even those who do not acknowledge that the Guiding Hand of Divine Providence, in mysterious and inexplicable combination or conflict with the human will, can alone account for character, do not look for a new dawn of Art, Literature or Philosophy among the Greeks.

They will resort to the statement that it was Macedonian ambition and Roman despotism that stifled the Greek genius. But no; the lesson that history unfolds is that as long as this great people sought to find out God, the elevated conceptions and glorious thoughts which such a search provides nourished and sustained the intellect. But it seems to have formed a part of the plan of Divine Providence to demonstrate man's utter incapacity to devise a system of religion for himself. And the greater failure involved all others.

Sparta and Carthage once stood pitted against Athens and Rome. At least so we believe on the testimony of the historians, for nothing remains of their splendid material civilization. They had no poets, for they had no lofty aspirations to embody, no longings for a purer state of existence to express. Hence, they are blotted from the roll of nations, and through her works of genius, Athens, as About says, has triumphed over Sparta for more than twenty centuries.

It is certainly strange that to the masses of mankind all the greatness of China is concentrated in the one man, Confucius, the marvelous lover of righteousness and truth; that the genius of India is known only through the Vedas, the "Ramayāna" and the "Māhabārata," vast collections of poems and precepts in honor of the gods or for the furtherance of piety; and that what we have of Etruscan Art corresponds so exactly with what we

are told of Etruscan character, in that mediocrity whose hopelessness consists in its unruffled placidity and contentment.

When the Arab dreamed of revealing a new system of dynamics to the world, it was as the founder of a new religion that he appeared before his contemporaries. We are so accustomed to regard Mohammed as "the false prophet," and to compare the religion, which he founded with the Christian religion that we have never accorded him the praise which is his due. Whether rightly or not applied to Mohammed in its primary meaning, the sublime language of the "Revelation,"

"And I beheld a star fall from heaven,"

cannot but be felt to be very applicable and highly suggestive in this connection. Though densely ignorant, he was a man of genius, and a man to whom religion was a necessity. That he was born to rule, born to be a leader among men, born, in the only sense in which one can be, "to the purple," that he knew his mental superiority to those around him, his own power and preëminence; and, on the other hand, the treacherous nature of the people with whom he had to deal, the difficulties and persecutions which awaited him, did not prevent him from desiring to be a teacher of religion—of a system of truth, which, however faulty, inconsistent and unreliable it might be, yet connected man's

present life with a Hereafter and made the eternal triumph over the temporal good.

As an illustration of the idea that genius draws its life from religion, nothing can be more forcible than the history of his followers, the Saracens. There is no parallel to the rapidity of their intellectual development. That their enthusiasm for knowledge produced the European revival of the Middle Ages, that our present type of civilization is largely due to their inventions and discoveries, and that even in Philosophy they anticipated many modern theories, are now so many authenticated facts. If ever the sun of prosperity shone on a people in unmitigated splendor, it was when, conquerors from Sinde to Spain, the almost omnipotent Arabs held the key to all, yes, all the treasures of the human intellect. Egyptian, Syrian, Indian, Persian, Greek and Roman lore lay at their feet. And this was to be seized by the most brilliant imagination, indomitable will and fiery energy of which the world has any knowledge. And for a time their progress was not disappointing. The genius of the Moslem

“Glares a broad column of advancing flame
Along the Danube and the Illyrian shore
Far into Italy.”

But the defeat at Tours, the deprivation of Grenada, the broken sword, the spilt blood will not explain the death of genius. Cæsar thought that he conquered Gaul; but his conquest was the baptism

of the phœnix ; the French rose on the ruins of the Latin language, and Gaul lived to do more than conquer her brutal conquerors. Germany was shaken to its centre by the Thirty Years' war just as an exquisite language and literature were efflorescing ; yet the subsequent full fruit in the ear outstripped every feature of its early promise. No ! impartial investigation must seek for other causes than unsuccessful warfare to account for the annihilation of genius. The very mention of the Arab recalls the religion with which he is identified. No one can glance into his history and refuse to acknowledge that religion here plays a *rôle* of supreme importance. And the inevitable corollary of this acknowledgment is that Islamism, like a blighting frost, sapped the national genius in the zenith of its glory, and poisoned the luscious fruits as they fell from the tree of knowledge.

As it was with the Greeks, so it was with the Saracens ; religion inspired and fostered the national genius as long as there was anything vital and pure in that religion (and the works of genius are indisputable witnesses to the fact that there are elements of vitality and purity in a subjective religion—that there is One who hears and responds to the desires of those who worship Him, even though it be as “the Unknown God”) ; but man must learn through bitter experience the absolute necessity of objective Truth, and the awful penalty affixed to a neglect in searching for it.

It is only in turning to the Christian religion, then, that we shall find the fullest, clearest, noblest manifestation of this principle. An unknown reader of this Essay as it was written and published several years ago wrote to me to ask "how it could be that a false and idolatrous religion could have inspired genius that would compare so favorably with the genius born of the true religion." "It would seem," he says, "that the genius of the one would be to that of the other as a mere human idea is to God's grandest conception."

This idea is totally irrelevant to my subject, which is not a comparison of different religious faiths and their specific effects upon the human intellect at all (though this would be a deeply interesting subject for investigation); my inquiry is of Faith, not faiths, of Religion, not religions, and of Genius, not degrees and kinds of genius. Life, itself, is not less the gift of God (and we who know it to be such are not the less willing to acknowledge it), because many who enjoy it do not recognize it as His gift. The French senator who thought that to abolish religious services would be "to banish God," was rightly met and answered by his brother senator, who reminded him that, religious services or no religious services, they could not banish God. No, I repeat, we cannot banish God, whether we see or do not see any indications of His presence and His power at any time, in any place.

The only reason we find the most satisfactory

connection between genius and religion in turning to Christianity is that we have a much better opportunity of judging. It is our own faith, and we love to learn what it has done. Moreover, no other faith has had nearly nineteen centuries of unbroken influence. And again, no other faith pretends to be as comprehensive.

Should we wish to institute a comparison—not between the intrinsic grandeur of ancient and modern works of Art, but—between the values the world now places upon the two, or the reasons for preferring the one to the other, we need not be alarmed for the Christian works. Who can seriously compare the Madeleine (and it is the best representation of the Parthenon that we can have), with Westminster Abbey? Or who can mention the Roman Basilicas in the same breath with the Cologne Cathedral? The world has been enriched by so many new ideas since the establishment of Christianity, that it is not possible to wander through St. Peter's and the Cologne Cathedral with the same feelings. Both are Christian Churches, so it is the Art itself, not the particular faith which moves one. Gothic Architecture shows us what the Christian religion has done to affect the Art of building. Nothing half so sublime, so majestic or so glorious had been conceived of in the classic world. It is the consecration of gloom, of melancholy, of sadness. The faultless Parthenon glittered with fair colors and dazzling marbles—telling

man that life was a boon to be enjoyed. The stern, dark Cathedral tells us that the seal of death is needed to dignify and exalt the grandest, as well as the meanest, human destiny.

So it is in comparing Greek Sculpture and Christian Painting. Let the ancient faith have its cold, emotionless, unsympathetic statues. Color, which Ruskin calls "of all God's gifts to the sight of man, the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn," "loved most by the purest and most thoughtful minds," comes to us through Christianity. It is needed to clothe ideas of transcendent beauty,—not of a tranquil, serene existence here on earth, "a refined and noble sensuality,"* but of a life which suffers because it loves, and in loving and suffering finds the mystery of its being solved as by no other principle.

Reverting to the peculiar connection between genius and the Christian religion from its very beginning, we find, first, the great Fathers of the Church. The Latin Fathers, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great were undoubtedly the most learned men of the age, three of them were lawyers of brilliant reputation and all had received the best education the times could afford. In that absolute devotion which can

* The phrase is Schlegel's, and, taken apart from the context, seems to me calculated to be misconstrued. I will therefore refer my reader to Lecture I. in "Dramatic Art and Literature."

only be excited in a strong mind to a cause which proves worthy of the most unwearied effort, we find the only satisfactory explanation of the incalculable influence these men have wielded, and do wield yet, in our own day. The Greek Fathers, Chrysostom, Basil, Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen are scarcely less celebrated. Their eloquence, their heroism, their firm faith will never cease to elicit praise. How is it with the men who opposed Christianity, wrote, taught, spoke against it? No one has ever pretended that Julian, Porphyry, Celsus, Theophilus, Hierocles, etc., were men of such genius and learning. Some, indeed, have said that because Christianity became the state-religion of the empire, therefore those who upheld and promoted it were brought into notice and those who opposed it were neglected and forgotten. But why did Christianity become the religion of the empire? Humanly speaking, only because it had become so strong that it could not be resisted. The minds which had given themselves up to its influence were so strengthened, expanded and elevated that they were able to convert a heathen world. We do not know how strong the human mind can prove itself until we see it consecrated to the Truth.

From the Fathers we pass to the Monks. Men devoid of religious feeling often speak and write with such rancor against priests and priestly influence that it can be attributed only to a base jealousy. This jealousy, from their point of view, is

not to be wondered at. In all ages priests—teachers sent from God—have exercised a power so much greater than any other which men can wield, that it must either be submitted to or scoffed at. We are not obliged to assume that such a power was conferred for a good purpose, for we cannot but enjoy tracing certain specific benefits to this source. No prejudices should be permitted to blind our eyes in this search for truth. The more closely we look into the details of History, the more reasonable do we find the establishment of religious communities. In the social chaos evolved by the overthrow of the Roman Empire, and in the consequent demand made upon every kind of energy, only a small portion of the people could devote themselves to intellectual education and culture. Why this portion was the religious portion I am unable to say, unless it is that there is some natural connection between learning and religion. Mrs. Jameson calls the Benedictine Order of Monks “the great instrument of civilization in modern Europe.” They were the sole depositaries of learning and the arts through several centuries, preserving and multiplying copies of the Scriptures, as well as all the works of Pliny, Sallust and Cicero. They were the fathers of Gothic Architecture, of a new school of Music and of agricultural science, and by their Order were either laid or preserved the foundations of all the eminent schools of learning in Europe. Don Lorenzo Monaco and Don Giulio Clovis are among the

greatest painters: Theophilus the Monk, in the twelfth century wrote an able treatise on Chemistry and the Fine Arts: Guido d'Arezzo was the inventor of the gamut: Guido Aretino, the greatest musician of his time, was the inventor of the modern system of musical notation.

After the Crusades the same reasons for a secluded, studious life no longer prevailed. The Mendicant Orders were instituted so that an authorized class of men could go out into the world as missionaries; preach, teach, comfort, guide the ignorant people, now rendered more distracted than ever by the social upheavals attendant on the Crusades. From Mr. Grote we learn that the Franciscan monks were the first persons to establish Lending-houses or Banks in Europe. And let us note the interesting fact that they did this for the express purpose of rescuing poor borrowers from the exorbitant interest imposed by individual lenders. It is something of a surprise to learn that these Lending-houses were originally called "Mounts of Piety," and that the discussion of their lawfulness was an ecclesiastical matter, the final decision resting entirely upon the authority of the Church. While the Benedictines and all the Orders derived from theirs had been promoters and encouragers of the Arts, the Mendicant Orders, and especially the Dominicans, became patrons on a scale of munificence never equalled before or since. It is to their patronage, chiefly, that we owe the greatest paintings,

sculptures and churches now in Europe. Fra Filippo Lippi, Fra Bartolomeo and Fra Angelico da Fiesole are names which the world will not willingly let die. The Jesuits also became patrons of Art, Rubens and Vandyck executing their finest works at their command. And another point worthy of notice is that the best element in these works is due to the influence of the Spanish school, which was almost exclusively religious, the Inquisition taking it upon itself to direct not only the general character, but the details of the works of Art. It is said that it is to this that we must ascribe the modesty and decorum of the vast majority of the Spanish pictures. Their great painter, Zurbaran, seems to have devoted himself wholly to the glorification of asceticism.

And what shall we say of the great mass of Legends from which the Christian world then drew its enthusiasm and the painters their inspiration? There are those to whom all of this is ridiculous, silly, puerile, the proof of a credulity too contemptible to be noticed. But here we must observe that the habit of looking at the ridiculous side of things is utterly destructive to the highest mental enjoyment. The very close affinity of genius with religion is due to the fact that both are concerned with the emotional nature. "Genius," says Mme. de Staël (I quote from memory), "recognizes its own power only by the depth of the emotion excited:" and if so, can be recognized by others only on the

same principle. Now deep feeling is altogether inconsistent with habitual jesting. Indeed we may gauge not only the emotions, but the whole mental capacity at once, by this fondness for ridicule; and, when found, it will always prove that capacity to be limited. Admiration and faith are only different manifestations of the same power. Both are based upon strong feeling. As Chateaubriand so succinctly says: "*J'ai pleuré, et j'ai cru.*" We pardon children and those who have never had a sorrow, for a levity of spirit which in older and more experienced persons is unbearable. When in these Legends of the Saints we find much that is touching, charming, beautiful, we have no difficulty in passing over the ideas foreign to our present modes of thought: indeed the imagination may transmute these very ideas so that much good may be obtained from them. We are not asked to receive these Legends as authorities in matters of fact relating to the History of mankind; but we must accept them as peculiar evidences of the faith and imagination of the age in which they were composed. In this way "fiction vouches for the genius of nations, while history has nothing to offer worthy of credit." It is only by the cultivation of a reverential spirit that we can hope to understand the great works of genius in Art and especially in Mediæval and modern European Painting: otherwise we see a great effect without any adequate cause.

Passing from the class of monks who were artists

and patrons of Art, we come to the Schoolmen, so slightly associated in most minds with the monastic life, that it seems strange to speak of them in this connection. In the subjects of their speculations the world has found much to ridicule, set aside and condemn. But the difficulty in understanding these subjects will account for this. The Schoolmen undertook to do what no class of men has ever since undertaken. They were to build up a Philosophy according to the Logic of Aristotle which was to exercise practical influence on the great questions of the day, political as well as ecclesiastical. The Science of Scholastics was a bold appeal to the efficacy of reason and intelligence in the settlement of all disputes. This was the first vindication of the power of the pen, the might of spiritual force in conflict with the brute force which wielded so gigantic a despotism in those days. And whether we study it in the life of St. Anselm, who "withstood" two Kings of England "to the face" for what he believed to be the truth; or in the achievements of Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus, whose knowledge of physics exposed them to the charge of "magic"; or in the preparation made by Isidore of Seville, Bede the Venerable and Alcuin the honored guide of Charlemagne, for the subtleties to be disputed among those great thinkers, Duns Scotus, the staunch upholder of Realism; Roscellinus, the celebrated founder of Nominalism; William of Champeaux, the successful teacher, who stirred to

life the slumbering eloquence of Abelard, the founder of Conceptionism, and in his turn, the teacher of Arnaud of Brescia; Bernard of Clairveaux, the Mystic, subduer and vanquisher of Abelard, and of popes, kings, and all who claimed authority, his absolutism being one of which no Cæsar ever dreamed; William of Wykeham, the statesman and founder of colleges; Occam, the politician, who defended the imperial throne against the papacy and turned the tide of public opinion for all time; Thomas Aquinas, the embodiment of the whole scholastic system, which attained in him its highest and most comprehensive development, and whom Sir James Mackintosh calls "the moral master of Christendom for three centuries"; Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson, who prepared the way for that great Augustine monk, Luther, whose work revolutionized the world, I think we shall find enough, and more than enough, to silence the gainsaying of those who have pronounced this scholastic system worthless, because they have not studied it, and the abuse of those who have studied it only to steal from it.

Of all the countries of modern Europe, Spain is that in whose history the influence of religion can be most clearly traced. Most erroneous ideas are often encountered as to the nature of this influence. Having shown that at one period proofs of genius in every province of thought abounded, and that a subsequent decline of all this glory set in and could

not be averted, Historians have then called attention to the fact that the Spaniards were a profoundly religious people, conveying the impression that they became so after their works of genius had been produced or during the process of their production, and stigmatizing the growing influence of ecclesiastical authority, as the antagonistic force in a national struggle for the supremacy of genius. This is just the reverse of the true order of events and influences. The Spaniards were first a religious people, then a great people. They have absolutely no works of genius except those inspired by religious enthusiasm. This is the point to be observed in their History and there is no other. When their religious enthusiasm died out, then their glory as a nation departed. Is it literary excellence that we seek? We can find no names to rival those of the idolized Lope de Vega and the noble Calderon, both priests and unquestioning believers in the national creed. Indeed Calderon, especially, reflects that serenity of spirit, that perfect equipoise of emotions which are only visible in Literature when the writer's faith is the expression of the nation's faith. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." When in the awful conflict between Justina and the Dæmon, in "*El Magico Prodigioso*" we find such noble utterances of belief as fall from the lips of the defenceless girl, we cannot wonder at the value set upon this Literature. The dialogue should find a place in every memory :

Dæmon. I am one
Called by the thought which tyrannizes thee
From his eternal dwelling : who this day
Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

Justina. So shall thy promise fail. This agony
Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm :
The will is firm.

Dæmon. Already half is done
In the imagination of an act.
The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains :
Let not the will stop half-way on the road.

Justina. I will not be discouraged, nor despair,
Although I thought it, and although 'tis true
That thought is but a prelude to the deed :
Thought is not in my power, but action is :
I will not move my foot to follow thee.

[SHELLEY'S Translation.

Seldom in all Literature is sophistry met and vanquished with such simplicity, and when the climax of this faith finds expression in the simple words : "My defense consists in God," we feel that this is also the climax of literary Art. As every one knows, it was under the influence of strong religious enthusiasm that the Italian, Columbus, conceived the mighty enterprise of discovering a new world. But it is not with Italy that we associate the glory of that enterprise. Columbus is immortalized through Spain's faith and Spain's assistance. The gracious and beautiful Isabella was inspired with a zeal which made men tremble. Not only did she grant Columbus the desired aid : it is to her personal

fluence and the influence of the religion which she promoted by every means in her power that we must ascribe the conquests of Peru and Mexico; and, without stopping to discuss the results of these conquests, we are forced to admit that administrative ability was nobly illustrated in the intrepid Pedro de la Gasca and military genius seldom eclipsed in the dauntless Hernando Cortez, both of whom labored solely for the triumph of the Cross.

In visiting Spain to-day and asking to be directed to her greatest works of Art, we are still confronted with the fruits of this faith during the one illustrious period. I have referred to the Spanish School of Painting. The devotional element in Painting attains such perfection in no other land. The very names of Murillo, Roelas, Zurbaran, Vincent de Juanes, Herera, Castillo, Valdès, Velasquez, Ribera and Carducho bring to mind the sacred themes so marvelously illustrated by their genius. The glorious Cathedrals of Seville, Burgos, Pampeluna, Toledo and Barcelona (the names of whose architects, after the fashion of the times, have long been cast into oblivion) are among the wonders of the world, and that imagination is dead indeed which is not kindled by the mere mention of the immortal trophies offered it in this guise.

Let any one ask himself why a school, a hospital or a private dwelling has never elicited the same degree of talent as a temple of worship, and the

connection between architectural genius and religion will soon become apparent.

In Italy and France we find pictures by the national artists characterized by a curious anomaly. Sacred personages, Saints and, sometimes, Angels there appear in the gorgeous court costumes of the Sixteenth Century. This is, at first sight, startling, almost shocking. But one soon learns to view it as one of the most fascinating, enthralling elements in that superb Art. Nothing could more powerfully witness to the reality of the world's faith and feeling. If the various narratives of the New Testament had not been thus represented in the guise of the manners and customs then prevailing, we would certainly never believe that such a thing was possible: that they are thus represented with a reverence which does not fall short of that expressed in purely devotional works must strike every one who is able to think about it as an unequaled proof of firm faith and religious fervor both in the painter and the public of that age.

In the great revival of Art for Art's sake which ushered in the dawn of Modern History, men bound by no vows and dependent upon no ecclesiastical system—that is, worldly men, actuated by the impulse of genius alone, as Michael Angelo, Raphael, Correggio, Titian, Tintoretto, Paul Veronese and Leonardo da Vinci, turned to the themes of the Evangelists as the needle turns to the pole. Need we, can we, ask the meaning of this noble

consecration? The significance, the completeness, the satisfying grandeur of all mental and moral beauty is found in the picture of

“The shuddering, bleeding, thirsting, dying God,
The Man of Sorrows, scourged and bruised and torn,
Suffering to save.”

Surely genius has never shone with more resplendent lustre, never scaled the empyrean of our nature with more god-like energy than in the bliss, the universal joy it has created in Music. The Bible has been the fount of inspiration to all who have produced immortal melodies. Haydn's "Creation," Handel's "Messiah," Mendelssohn's "Elijah" and Mozart's glorious "Masses" are the works of souls that have been steeped in heavenly learning. Beethoven's "Mount of Olives," Bach's "Passion Music," Rossini's "Statat Mater" and "Moses in Egypt,"—the grandest compositions of all time, and the only music all lovers of the glorious Art feel convinced can never perish—show that religion alone is able to call forth the sublimest efforts of this grandest proof of human greatness. This is the opinion of musicians, not of moralists. Even the lover of the petty and immoral Opera still has the grace to blush for his taste.

Finally, when we find that the "Divine Comedy," the "Jerusalem Delivered," and the "Paradise Lost," the three greatest poems that the world has produced in the course of nearly three thousand

years, and the only epic poems produced at all since the establishment of Christianity, are based entirely upon revealed religion and the teachings of the Church, the idea that not only is there no repulsion, but that there is positive affinity between genius and religion is forced upon us. Is it not evident that religion is the pivot of the human mind? The greater the genius the more impossible is it for man to forget that his "origin and destiny are higher than the heavens." The conclusion of the highest criticism is that all truly creative poetry must proceed from the inward life of a people and from religion, the root of that life; and that this alone explains the failure of Tragedy among the Romans and the French. They sought to give expression to a foreign religion in imitating Greek Tragedy; hence the fettering of all spontaneous feeling and the lamentable failure to enlarge the sphere of human consciousness.

But while many will agree that the general conclusions we have reached are too significant to be put down under the head of "coincidences," "adventitious and curious phenomena," etc., it may be doubted whether such an argument can be sustained when applied to individual character. It seems that in some notable instances genius has been the cause of moral and religious shipwreck.

Let us widen our horizon. That genius should be the means of *making* men religious would be simply monstrous. This, indeed, would constitute a form

of election which the most zealous Calvinist would denounce. It is only that as every advantage creates an additional responsibility, when gifted men are false to their responsibility, an enlarged consciousness provokes a greater outcry. Genius is in itself an advantage, but the greatest advantages are always the greatest tests. Great religious advantages have as frequently proved the death-blow to the religion of individuals as those of any other description. When these tests are applied, and men are found wanting, the deplorable point is not that they have fallen through the lack, but in spite of the abundance, of ability. To distinguish the occasion from the cause is a lesson that we cannot study too often. Christianity has been the occasion of the worst persecutions the world has known. So has genius been the occasion of ruined lives. But the cause of both lies in that desperate wickedness of the heart, not the least feature of which is the calling of good, evil, and of evil, good.

For my own part, I should not hesitate to assert that the men of greatest genius have been the men of most remarkable piety. The world always will go on expecting and demanding everything of one person. From the experience of the past, it is very evident that no one is to have this monopoly. Still, it is hard to produce greater names than those of Pascal, Gerson, Dante, Milton and Newton. For ordinary people to palliate their own shortcomings with the idea that the greater the mind the greater

will be the disdain for religion is certainly an indication of more than ordinary weakness.

But my reader may say 'What of Shakespeare'?

No one contends that all the benefit man can confer on his fellows is to be confined to the avowed teachings of the moralist. And yet, Shakespeare is a moralist of the highest order. It was he who first dared to break away from the dramatic unities that he might make character preponderate over action, time, and place. Not in a single instance has he "clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul;" In "Macbeth"—"the most sublime and impressive drama which the world has ever beheld"—the "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" sounds as with trumpet-blast. There is scarcely a Play in which human responsibility and accountability are not made prominent. Especially in "Hamlet" do we find the lesson that life is too short to waste in speculation and inaction. Critics now think that after the composition of the five great Tragedies—works of an almost fearful gloom—there came a time of calm after storms, when he who doubtless had known more than life's ordinary sorrows could say (as he actually writes in his last work):

"I know myself now, and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience."

And graver question yet, what of that great

genius who has just passed from us, universally acknowledged incomparable among the writers of our century? Here, again, while there is no didactic morality, no works ever appealed more powerfully to the moral nature than do George Eliot's. They are veritable tests, scrutinizing the heart with their terrible introspection, invigorating to the pure, and full of despair to the hopeless. In reading the "Life" that has been given to the public, we find it singular that not a vestige of the doubt and faithlessness which disgraced it can be detected in the author's works. We cannot put this down solely to the fact that they were written to be read, and could find no readers had they reflected the author's true thoughts and feelings. Rather must we believe that there was such a deep sense of the beauty and completeness of the Christian religion, that in the conception and execution of a work of Art this mighty genius could find no other inspiration. Self-deceived as to the record of her own sentiments she may have been; but as to those of her heroes and heroines, never!

This ideal haunts the genius even when the character is feeble. Do men wail as did Byron, or sneer with the bitterness of Voltaire, or weep outright as Rousseau, or sigh as did Shelley, unless there is something to wail or to sneer about? Total silence alone would convince us of indifference in the matter of religion; in the case of the poet, especially, the greater the protest, the profounder

the feeling on the subject. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alexandre Vernet, Pressensé, Racine, W. Von Schlegel, Edmund Spencer, Calderon and Wordsworth, show us genius unsullied by the protests of moral weakness.

There is, however, a gross injustice in making a question of this kind turn upon individual character. Except in the case of a man's open avowal of infidelity, we have no right to judge of the amount of religion anyone possesses. Surely we dare not judge by the actual, outward life. That belief in circumstances which would ruin our own life is a very stronghold of hope as to the lives of others. A preëminently interesting book might be written on the incidents in life which account for infidelity. No one can read the lives of Hume, Gibbon, Mill, Voltaire, Rousseau and Shelley, and not spurn the heartless verdict of the world, while he rejoices that they are to be judged by One who "seeth not as man seeth." To many persons it is impossible to separate the place occupied in history from the private and totally unknown inner life of a man. But we cannot understand the true significance of living until we see that the one is to be judged without any, the other in full view of all, extenuating circumstances. It is right that the judgment of all time should be irrespective of the extenuations, but it is only fair in considering such a question as the present one to remember that there is a veil that

hides the heart's holy of holies from all save the chosen few of rare intuitive perception.

It is believed by some that immorality and irreligion are the special privileges of genius, and that the world smiles on that type of character in a celebrity which it would hoot at in a nonentity. That this has been done cannot be denied. But by whom? By that large class who certainly have not done anything to distinguish themselves—too weak mentally to carry through a crime successfully, too weak morally to be aware of their vacuity.

Again, there are those who like to bring forward proofs of the weaknesses, eccentricities, infirmities, which occasionally accompany the possession of genius. Oh, worse than wasted is the time spent in reading, or writing, or thinking about such topics as "the vanity and insanity of genius!" What we want, as Victor Hugo says, is to be filled with the folly of admiration. The starting point of education is admiration. Admire, and you will begin to think, to feel, to enjoy, to live. When the skeptic asks, "Is life worth living?" it creates no comment, for it seems but the proper thing for him to ask. If there is no end in view, why be interested in any means? To one who believes, "education in its widest sense—the development of spirit, the deepening of consciousness, the salvation of the soul—is the end to which all else in life is but means." It is important, then to garner every grand and beau-

tiful thought that is scattered broadcast upon the world.

The genius that is artistic and seemingly the result of inspiration is not the only form in which rare intellectual power displays itself. That massive breadth of mind which enables its possessor to grapple with the very construction of the mind itself, has, perhaps, conferred more real benefit upon mankind than the more æsthetic type. Now, the greatest metaphysicians the world has known have worked directly in the interests of religion. Descartes, Leibnitz, Butler, Hamilton, Edwards, Bledsoe, and McCosh have been as eloquent defenders of Christianity as they remain unrivaled champions in Philosophy.

The savage tribes which still exist in Africa and in North and South America show us the condition of the human mind when abandoned to the influences of Nature. It would seem, then, that the mere tradition of Divine revelation is not enough to excite mental activity, for all of these tribes have that. There must be some fragment of clearly defined truth upon which genius can expatiate as authoritatively in its way as religion. This, then, gives its value to genius, and forever banishes the idea that it consists in self-illumination or exists for merely worldly purposes. If in a review of General History we carefully trace the causes and effects of man's greatest efforts, we shall find that they are put forth only under the stimulus of relig-

ious belief, that is, belief in the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards and punishments, and this is the explanation of the unparalleled activity displayed under the influence of the Christian religion, no other religion having attempted to speak with the same authority on these subjects. Who with the slightest knowledge of the past can tolerate such expressions as the "six great religions of the world," "the religion that is to supersede Christianity," etc.? Such writers presuppose an immense amount of ignorance in their readers. Was it by chance that Dante, Tasso and Milton chose religious themes for the expression of towering genius? The very genius, itself, is the product of Christianity. If the fruits of deism are a Darwin, a Huxley, and a Spencer, this is all very well and good, but the humblest Christian need not be afraid to challenge the world to choose between these trios. As Tacitus describes Rome as "the city into which flow all things that are vile and abominable," so it would almost seem that if there be any praise or any virtue, it has flowed into the service of the Christian Church. Without have been the sorcerers, the false and the defiled, but as in the heavenly, so in the earthly, Jerusalem, the kings of the earth, *i.e.*, the truly regal ones—those crowned above their fellows—have already brought their gifts, their glory and honor unto Him who in the first place gave them.

But it may be asked, Are not scientists to be ac-

counted men of genius? By all means. I should be the last to forget Kepler, Newton, Laplace, Bacon, Herschell, Davy, Maury, and many others who have been illustrious Christian scientists. But the attitude of scientists towards religion is necessarily peculiar, for the study of the sciences is a study of second causes, and leads directly away from the contemplation of the First Great Cause. The scientific mind is one of discovery; the poetic, imaginative, religious mind one of invention.

As religion has furnished genius with its subject matter through the ages, so is genius now the faithful ally of religion.

Genius annihilates all theories of evolution, heredity, the reign of law, philosophical necessity, etc., proving, indisputably, not only that there is a Maker of heaven and earth, but that there is a Providential Ruler who endows when and where He pleases, gives man powers which no human striving ever gives him, and has so ordered the action of those powers that they have been used in His service and redound to His glory.



GENIUS AND MORALITY.

WHILE many have noted and gloried in the very remarkable progress that has been made in the study of Physical Science in our day, few, I think, have turned their attention to the still more striking fact that in no age of the world's history has the study of Moral Science made such rapid strides, or ruled with such undisputed sway as in this same age. In order to realize this we have only to endeavor to understand the "general ideas" which have from time to time dominated mankind, and especially those which have brought about our present state of civilization.

There never has been a time since men have lived together in the Social State in which an instinctive love of the Beautiful has not manifested itself—in a form, of course, in harmony with the understanding of the age. History falsely so called is, indeed, the record of such a din of strife, conquest, revelry, and passion, that we are apt to forget the nobler forces at work and their supremely important bearings on human happiness. But thanks to the imperishable Art-fragments of many countries, we have indisputable proof that in all times and in

all places man aspires to something more than animal gratification and sensual luxury. His love of the Beautiful rescues him from the condition of a brute.

As an abstract theory, Art-culture, of all attainments, would seem to be the last to be expected from early civilizations. Yet as an actual fact we find the Arts born at the very dawn of History: and, compared with other evidences of mental power, there is nothing which will at all vie with that which has come down to us through the passion for the Beautiful. In other departments, we see the old continually superseded by the new. In this we find the new continually overshadowed by the old.

Philosophers tell us of two intuitions unlike all others and to be placed in the first rank as regards the welfare of the race—the love of the Beautiful and the love of the Right. But among the nations of antiquity and among all heathen nations of every age, how feeble is that which is called the strength of the latter! Agonies of conscience, bodily mutilation, martyrdom, heroism itself—all scarcely avail to advance a people one step in the scale of pure morality.

And now the question will not but present itself: Why was the power of the one intuition so much greater than that of the other? Why does the idea of the Beautiful precede that of the Right? Surely

so momentous a permission cannot have been without design.

That in all ages men recognize the natural sovereignty of the gifted few and, as it were, themselves authorize the expression of the common taste by those few, are principles bound up with the very existence of society. Very early in the history of each nation is its national genius recognized, and nothing more clearly distinguishes one nation from another than the type of Art in which that genius "bodies forth the forms of things unknown." Of course not all the forms in which genius manifests its power come under the head of Art. But this concession is considerably modified by the fact that this is ever its noblest province, and again by the fact that other embodiments of this power gain in estimation by their Art-affinity. But while military, mechanical and inventive genius have to do with the keenest intellectual perception and the æsthetic dicta of order, proportion, symmetry and law, they do not express the same power either in scope or purpose; for the reason that the less the Beautiful has in common with the Useful, the more decidedly do we estimate it as the Beautiful *per se*. Were the Beautiful subservient to the Useful and under this head to the Right, we feel that it would at once lose its distinctive character, and cease, in fact, to be.

It is certainly a curious and striking fact that in all countries and in all cases, man's love of the

Beautiful leads him to the contemplation of the Supernatural, the Divine,—that Immaterial Essence of which Beauty is vaguely felt to be in some way a reflection. The Art world is of itself a proof that man is a spiritual being. The Art of Egypt, of Babylonia, of Greece, of Europe is in every instance the expression of national Religious belief. Archæologists say that not a single specimen of Egyptian Domestic Architecture has withstood the test of time, meaning that no skill or taste was ever lavished on this branch of art, for of course this is the only reasonable explanation of the hiatus. It was not Hieratic despotism that dictated the Columns of Karnack or the Obelisks of Luxor. Nor was it Aristocratic despotism which led to the erection of magnificent Palaces rather than Temples in Assyria. The student of Ancient History knows well that the ideas of priest and king were in early times inseparably bound together, and that both emanated from the universally confessed need of an Intercessor and a Ruler, the one being simply a modification of the other according to the urgency of the need that was uppermost. The beautiful Obelisks of Egypt are objects of as much admiration to us* as to the ancient Egyptians, because the thought of which this exquisite design is but the outward form, has to do with the very laws of our existence

* Rome, Paris, London, and New York vie with each other as *villes de luxe* in the possession of these treasures.

—the laws of all intellectual life. The Art of Egypt and Assyria is not any more symbolic than that of Greece and Rome.* It may not be classic in the sense that idea and form reach a perfect equipoise, but it is expressive of ideas which are clearly defined and have been clearly understood by all succeeding generations. The question as to whether the classic in Art is always most pleasing to the human mind is still largely open to discussion, for reasons inherent in the very nature of all Art-theories, a subject which is brought into great prominence in the study of the European Renaissance. Architecture was not the chosen Art of the Egyptians because they had dim, adumbrated ideas to express: nor because it is, compared with later Arts, as the simple to the complex, the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. There is no infantile simplicity about Architecture and no apology to be made for its weakness. M. Duruy calls it the Art *par excellence*.

Only in a single instance—that of Sculpture—did the Egyptians submit themselves unreservedly to Priestly dictation, and all are agreed that this is the sole cause of imperfection and lack of progress in this branch of Art. But why should the priests have insisted upon the stationary and immature in

*The comparison is, of course, between the representative Arts: *i.e.*, the Architecture of Egypt and the Sculpture of Greece; the Bas-reliefs of Assyria and the Architecture of Rome.

Sculpture rather than in Architecture? Is it not manifestly because they, being the directors of the Nation, and men of genius themselves, saw that this was not in accordance with the Egyptian National genius? Critics agree that perfection of execution might have been attained. Have any told us of the special ideas to be set forth in this way by this peculiar people? And has mechanical dexterity anything to do with the vital principles of Art-expression? The same principle which explains the grandeur of their Architecture explains the weakness of their Sculpture. There were ideas to be set forth—of Eternity, Immortality, Rest, Repose: ideas of God-like strength, of vastness, the awful, the sublime—of the awe-inspiring power of magnitude; in short, there was spiritual aspiration on a colossal scale, and not only were those leaders of the Nation wise in directing the flow of such ideas into appropriate channels, but we may safely believe all the true artists of the age led the way in this direction and were fortunate in securing the sanction of the great hierophants.

This is no overestimation of Egyptian Art. There is a *naïveté* about all great Art, an unconsciousness in all true genius, and of course each succeeding generation may impute new motives to the past. But the Art of one generation could not be the delight of another (not to hint at those most remote from it) were it not a principle in the creation of the Beautiful, that more meaning can be drawn out

of such a work than its author was aware of putting into it. But when much is drawn out, then we cannot be mistaken in believing that something was put in. Of course, in judging the Arts of different countries, we ought never to leave out of consideration the merit due to those coming first in the order of time. No possible improvement upon an original conception can rival, much less eclipse, the glory due to the original conception. If it be said we cannot trace any continuity of influence here, still more clearly is it evident that Chronology has nothing to do with the strength of man's native intuitions.

Even in the subordinate Arts which (here, as in all Art-epochs) cluster around the one great national expression, we find ideas of grandeur, majesty and dignity. In the winged, human-headed Bulls and Lions of Assyria and Egypt we are startled to see that triune union of the spiritual, the intellectual and the animal which is ever the same mystery to man in all ages.

In what almost haughty grandeur do the Egyptians tower above all the nations of antiquity in their solemn and ceaseless contemplation of Death and the Life Beyond! How inflexible is their resolve as a people to make the dread spectre a daily realization! In their worship of the mysterious vital spark, acknowledged to be as incomprehensible in animal as in human existence, in a noble veneration for life in its lowest forms, and, above all, in their

thrice emphatically proclaimed conviction not only of the immortality of the soul, but of that which yet shakes and thrills the spirit of man to its inmost depths—the resurrection of the body—we feel that they have indeed scaled glorious heights in spiritual and intellectual attainments, and herein find a worthy basis for their noble Art. For most certainly without these ideas we should never have had the Pyramids, the Obelisks, the Temples, or the Sculptures.

When we turn to Assyrian History and Art, we find few great and spiritual ideas, and few great and enduring masterpieces. No one seems to have pointed out the connection. Critics find little to interest in Assyrian Architecture and try to hurry over it. Not being in search of any profound religious conceptions upon which to found the Art, they cannot explain why it is that they see nothing in it to detain their attention. “Muscular strength and power of an intensely earthly and human nature” is all that can be rightly divined in it. It is avowedly interesting only as affording the genesis of Hellenic Art or in the guise of Archæology and Antiquarian research.

Many writers are, in fact, inclined to waive this question of Assyrian Art altogether, and emphasize the fact that the Chaldean genius found expression in Science rather than Art—the Chaldeans having been the earliest students of that noblest of Sciences, Astronomy, although even this found an affinity with the prevailing culture of those early times in that

it was made immediately subservient to Religious Belief. There is something truly pathetic in the debasement of Astronomy into Astrology—that proof of feeble faith and sickening fear, compelling a cringing subservience to those who could read the horoscope and who seemed to hold destiny itself in their power; identical with the Greek dependence upon legend, the mythical epopee and the Oracular responses; yet what a testimony to the recognized need of some positive teaching in religion!

But the Chaldeans and Assyrians are not the representatives of the Oriental genius. Its true value can only be gauged in a study of certain wide-spread and long-enduring ethical influences. When Egypt appears in History it is already a mighty nation, all connection with the earliest separation of the human family being purely conjectural. But it is not so with the great peoples clustering around the four famous rivers. Here it is possible to trace the influence of the Turanian upon the Semitic, far more to see that of the Semitic upon the Aryan. Prehistoric study has in our own day become one of the most fascinating branches of research: and while the most learned writers of the age labor to unravel the fanciful myths and traditions of the ancient peoples, and to show us that the whole intellectual force of such nations was occupied in framing religious beliefs, ordinances and rites, it is to me a most astonishing fact that they never seem to care to ask why this was so; what the connection was: and still

a thousand times stranger that the very men who now spend their lives in telling us of the religions of other people and of the avidity with which those people seized upon the merest fragments of religion, should themselves so *naïvely* display their own distaste for that incomparable Religion ("to speak," as St. Paul says, "as a fool") which has blessed their own day and generation; thereby so clearly proving their own poverty in those mental endowments which made their myth-makers great. On one page they tell us that nothing so beautiful has been evolved since men ceased to give themselves up to the contemplation of the supernatural, and on the next page that there is no such thing as the supernatural. While there is a thin vein of analogy between the early stages of civilization and the childhood of the individual, to allow more than this would be to make out a very strong argument for the superiority of childhood. All we have to go upon is that in an age of unparalleled splendor in the almost limitless fertility of the creative imagination, the human mind abandoned itself to the contemplation of Beings or Powers alien to those prescribed by human destiny.

Man is guided in his love of the Beautiful by an instinctive perception. This, like the need of some religion, lies at the very foundation of his being. As in Art, so in Religion, the individual man is the product of his age. For the universality of religious belief in those early ages we need not ask

for more efficient causes than the sense of sin and need : the irresistible march of a great idea,* the excitement pertaining to its novelty ; the spontaneity, intensity, and unexhausted condition of the feelings, quickening the imagination and elevating all the powers of the mind preternaturally. Grote leaves no room for the supposition that the mythopœic faculty has anything to do with chronology. And Dr. Wilson distinctly tells us that "the term Prehistoric has no chronological significance." The sum and substance of this original thinker's researches may be found in the enunciation that "all nations are Prehistoric whose chronicles are undersigned and whose history is wholly recoverable by induction." A very little reflection shows us that we have fully developed civilizations in the Nineteenth Century, B.C. and prehistoric peoples in the Nineteenth Century, A.D.

* Let me refer here to a striking passage in the recent work of my friend, Dr. Thomas Scott Bacon,—“The Reign of God not the Reign of Law:”—What became afterwards of that true knowledge which the first man had? Can we think that the first knowledge utterly perished from later generations? It is not fanciful, but most reasonable to suppose that any great idea of truth, once getting abroad among men, will never perish from among them. It may be mingled by them with false notions so as to disappear to ordinary notice in the compound. But it will still remain in the thoughts of men and work powerfully in all their history. The original revelation of God survives in the idea of any religion; of some being power and person (or persons) above man; of this Divine law and will being contrary to man's corrupt self-will.”

But to return to the subject of the Oriental genius and to the traces of Art-culture and civilization which are at work long before the myth-makers appear on the scene. To us who think we have good reason for belief in the supernatural, interest in an inquiry into the life of the ancients centers upon those favored people who have transmitted to us the "Oracles of God." It is with almost breathless interest that we seek the meaning of the Beautiful in those forms which God, Himself, has sanctioned. If it is a genuine delight to try to trace out those vague conceptions of the human intellect which testify to the existence of something above and beyond man's full appreciation in this life, with what a tenfold and awe-struck curiosity do we approach the study of those conceptions of the Divine Intellect upon which the Almighty Maker of all things has Himself set His seal! There are learned critics who make the statement that "the Jews had no Art." Again, there are others who believe that all they had was derived immediately from the surrounding idolatrous nations. This provokes investigation.

I have referred to one of the most striking Art-forms of Assyria and Egypt,—the human-headed, winged bull or lion. To one who has not had the privilege (which I, myself, have had) of seeing the grandest of these representations, in the British Museum, words will hardly convey any impression of their solemnity, of their ugliness (almost bordering on the horrible) and of their stately and overpower-

ing grandeur. These figures of such mysterious and fearful aspect are claimed by many learned writers* to be the models of the Hebrew Cherubim, which in the Assyrian tongue are known as Kirubu.

The Historical connection is that the Jews had no Tabernacle until they had left Egypt; hence of course (?) they carried their recollections of Egyptian Art into the works made for the wilderness-temple.

No one attempts to say whether the Egyptians derived the idea from the Assyrians or the Assyrians from the Egyptians. It is considered a rather striking fact that when Moses is commanded to make the Cherubim, it is assumed that he knows what they were. Again, it has been assumed that in the descriptions of the Cherubim in the Psalms, Second Book of Samuel and Ezekiel, the Bible writers use the language of the folklore of the Tigro-Euphrates valley. "Kirubu," says M. Lenormant, "is a synonym for the steer-god, whose winged image filled the place of guardian at the entrance of the Assyrian Palace." According to the learned F. Delitzsch, Kurubu is a synonym of Kurukhu, "the circling bird." Commenting upon both of these, Mr. Cheyne, the well-known English authority, says: "The two forms seem to be coördinate and expressive of some quality common to the King of birds and the colossal steer." It is amusing to find that not one statement made by Lübke in re-

* Reber, Layard, De Saulcy.

gard to the Cherubim is correct; his translator being obliged in a foot-note to place a negative particle before each one of these statements. The *χερουβ*, according to Dr. Wm. Smith, was a symbolical figure, a composite creature-form, which finds a parallel in the religious insignia of Assyria, Egypt, and Persia. "In such forms," he goes on to say, "every imaginative people has sought to embody its notions either of the attributes of the Divine Essence or of the vast powers of nature which transcend those of man." I think Dr. Smith would imply that under the given conditions the human mind would naturally invent the Cherubim.

We know that so greatly does the spiritual take precedence over the material, that any representation of majestic and glorious conceptions seems inadequate. Every true artist suffers in the acknowledged shortcoming of the outward expression of his inward thought. But allowing all this, to me it is simply shocking to consider the monsters of the British Museum identical with the sacred, awful Cherubim of the Bible. Fortunately, then, for me, I find after an examination of many different hypotheses, no reasonable grounds for such belief. In the first place, the Cherubim were known to primitive man long before Egypt and Assyria were heard of. And in the field of pure conjecture, I can think of nothing more unnatural and improbable than the invention of the Cherubim. The facts that Egypt had Cherubim, that Assyria and Persia

had Cherubim, and that Moses was not permitted to expatiate upon the form of the archetypal Cherubim all point back most impressively to a time when the first few members of the human race saw a Divine manifestation of this unearthly and terrific form,—a fact which is expressly recorded in the Second Chapter of Genesis for our benefit. And in addition to this common heritage, Moses was expressly commanded to make every detail for the Tabernacle after “the pattern which was shewed him in the mount.” Then, although they are the Divine heraldry, as Dr. Smith says, marked, carved or wrought everywhere on the house and furniture of God, these are, really, but cherubic insignia. The real Cherubim were seen by the Priests only, and their peculiar form will always remain an impenetrable mystery. In Ezekiel’s vision they are undoubtedly possessed of glorious and dazzling beauty. And this alone would make it seem most probable that the Cherubim of the uncovenanted nations—the combination of vague tradition and original genius—retained scarcely a point in common with the true form. All hope of historical enlightenment ceases with the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, for in the Second Temple there was no Ark; no need of guardians of its mercy-seat, nor of avengers of its broken law.

The powerful hold which this idea of the Cherubim had upon the mind is seen in all subsequent Art. Modern European painting is aglow with

Cherubic forms, the transmutation into a representation of angelic childhood, or simply into a winged infant head,* still bearing the traces of its symbolic origin. St. John's description of the Cherubim in the "Revelation" is literalized into the representation of the four Evangelists, the symbolism living on long after the devout spirit of early Christian Art had taken its flight. The significance of wings in Art is sometimes described as a legacy from Nature-myths. It is not. It is a religious idea, spiritual, rather than spirituelle, although in the graceful fancy expressed in the conception there is a purely artistic merit.

However far men may have wandered from the true objective reality of which this singular form is a representation, it is ridiculous to suppose that there is no such reality. No Art-critic has done more than play upon the surface of the ideas expressed in the true Cherubim. The grandeur of those ideas is set forth in a work which (to me) so far transcends other books that no comparison can possibly be instituted. In "Mediatorial Sovereignty" by George Steward of Ireland will be found a magnificent exegesis of the whole ground

* The bodiless winged-head appears in Art only after the gravest heresies had prevailed among thinkers. The seat of evil was supposed to be in the body; hence it was to be annihilated. This representation is, therefore, but a poor fragment of the original, magnificent conception:—as false in form as in idea.

covered by this wonderful manifestation of triune spiritualized existence.

But though one of the most important, this is by no means the only form of Art which the Hebrews seem to have had in common with other nations. The Temple (and what nation pretending to any civilization had not its Temple?) whose beauty was entirely typical of spiritual realities, with its pillars named "In it is strength," and "He shall establish," its molten sea resting upon twelve brazen oxen, its altars, embroidered curtains and golden candlesticks, did not only partake largely of Phœnician style and adornment, but was the work, in a measure, of Phœnician Artists.

From any point of view it must be regarded as a singular thing that the marked, characteristic and peculiar Art-form of one country should attain its highest development and receive its praise through the ideas of another country. The sphyraton style, the carved wooden form covered with sheets of metal, known to us in embryo in the Homeric epics, the invention and pride of Phœnicia, was not imitated by the Hebrews, but adopted *in toto*. Both Hiram the king and Hiram the architect of Tyre are identified with Solomon's Temple. The metal hitherto employed by the Phœnicians had been copper, bronze, or silver; in this case the carved wood of Lebanon, the most beautiful in the world for carving, was overlaid with pure gold. In all cases where solid gold could not be employed, this

empaistic work came into use, with a significance rendered evident not only by its dazzling beauty, but by some occult suggestion of an inward, hidden perfection upon which that outward beauty was helplessly, yet triumphantly, dependent.

Not, however, in the detail of the interior, lavish and magnificent as was the material employed, lay the chief charm and beauty of the Temple. The site of the building, the marvel and the admiration of travelers of every age and race, made it worthy to be called "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

A study of the Temple opens up a subject of endless interest, I think;—the connection, and the responsibility involved in the connection, between the Chosen People and the various heathen nations with whom they were Providentially brought in contact. In my reading I do not remember seeing any due stress placed upon the moral influences which must have acted and reacted upon the Jews and the Mesopotamians, the Jews and the Egyptians, the Jews and the Assyrians, the Jews and the Phœnicians, the Jews and the Chaldeans, the Jews and the Medes, the Jews and the Persians, the Jews and the Greeks, the Jews and the Romans, successively brought into the closest contact and at crucial periods of their histories.

I have assumed here a divinely implanted intuition, governing and guiding the self-originating, self-developing power of civilization. I do not be-

lieve that there ever existed a time when the Heavenly Father's care was confined to the one people. Of course I do not believe it would be possible to unravel the mysterious and inextricably confused threads of influence which must have been woven into the destiny of those alien nations. But, as I said before, the subject, if once clearly presented to the mind, can scarcely fade from it. Inexplicably it will modify all research into Ancient History. Many persons have the most shocking ideas on this subject. They do not understand that the Jews were only the representatives of the human family, and that their privileges (like all those accorded the individual) were irrevocably bound up with the gravest responsibilities. Not only in Bible History, but throughout the Book itself, one can scarcely fail to see that a contribution is levied upon everything actually existent and within the scope of the understanding which will in any way facilitate the elucidation of spiritual truth. Alexander Von Humboldt touches upon this from the most rationalistic standpoint when speaking in terms of unbounded admiration of the civ. Psalm.

Speaking, as we are, of Art in its widest sense, we cannot, of course, omit the mention of the unparalleled beauty of Jewish Literature. There is so much literature which has no artistic value, which does not, indeed, come under the head of Art at all, that here we must again remind ourselves of the true and proper demands of Art.

There is much that interests us, much that awakens admiration and delight (as the beauty of the material world, the wonders and enunciations of Science, etc.,) which does not appeal to us with the peculiar power belonging to the Art-world. There our interest is not concentrated upon the idea, the conception, the inward thought to be expressed, nor upon the manifestation, the beauty itself, but is equally divided between the idea and the special means adapted to express that idea. Mere form is a means of exquisite delight to true lovers of Art. This is horrifying to the uninitiated, who imagine we are talking of the superficial, or the merely artificial. But no Art could exist at all, still less could the love of it be styled universal, did not people utterly incapable of Art-production find a peculiar pleasure in the effort to explain the meaning of pure form. And it is a well-known fact that a class exists apart from artists, whose members have proved themselves far more capable as interpreters of Art than artists themselves, and who have frequently revealed to the individual artist the meaning of his own work. Literature regarded as Art is so much the most complex of its forms, calling into activity the combined forces aroused by other forms, and hence, destined to exercise universal sway only in the full maturity of the race, that it is undoubtedly one of the most marvelous things in the world that its existence can be traced to such a remote period as that found in the History of the

Hebrews. Again, it is an astonishing thing that the Revelation which is given to man to enable him to crucify all propensities to evil and warn him of judgment to come, should be clothed in forms of indestructible loveliness. The incomparable hold which the Bible has on mankind is certainly based, in part, upon this love of the beautiful. Here all see, as many may not be willing to acknowledge with regard to other forms of Art (as Architecture and Sculpture), the wonderful spiritual power of the Beautiful. When we join the general wail (too often one of pure affectation) over the imperfection of everything on earth, let us remember that we can conceive of nothing so perfect as the language of the Bible. Our inquiry here into the meaning of the Beautiful leads up to the consideration of the inspiration of the Bible, for at this point an unmistakable similarity between genius and inspiration is discovered. But at this very moment, in the act of making the discovery, a most striking and unmistakable dissimilarity is also perceived.

One of the most gifted daughters of modern Israel, Miss Emma Lazarus, in a poem of wonderful beauty represents the Egyptian as seeking Wealth, the Greek, Beauty, the Roman, Power and the Hebrew, Truth. So keen and piercing an intellect as that of F. W. Robertson has left on record a statement to the effect that the Jews were confessedly the most spiritual of mankind. But here we have in reality a point of divergence of the very profound-

est import, affording a key to the solving of a grave question. A little attention given to the History of the Jewish people, as written by themselves, will soon show any candid reader that they were not in search of truth, nor by any means the most spiritually minded of mankind. I am astonished that such gifted writers as those cited should forget that we ordinary people have access to the archives. The marked feature of the Art of this people is that it is in no respect the creation of genius. In nothing that they accomplished in Bible times do they claim for themselves or is ever claimed for them the possession of genius. They exercise no military or inventive genius, no genius for organization, for government, for conquest or for Art. Whether they were gifted or not we have no means of knowing.* The only thing we do know is that they were authoritatively withheld from originating anything great. All that is great in that History is due to the working of Divine, not human power, and the subjection of the human is not more unmistakable than the sway of the Divine. The purely Historical Books of the Bible go to prove that if the Hebrews were in search of anything it was of error. The statement that they had no Art is not true ;

* To judge the ancient Greek or German by the modern would certainly be to set all methods of historical investigation at defiance.

they had Art, but its peculiarities are that it was neither self-originated nor borrowed, and no wonder it is a puzzle to those who cannot find the key. This is the only Art in the world that is to be viewed solely from the subjective stand-point. The supernaturalism of the Bible isolates the Jews from all other nations, inasmuch as we cannot but discover a distinct purpose in that isolation. But at the same time the very contrast for contrast shows us that there was a purpose, not indeed of the same dignity or magnitude, but still a distinct purpose in permitting other nations to exercise the gifts showered upon them so unstintedly.

But I fear that I have already dallied too long with a part of my subject which has been so full of interest to myself. I have said enough to afford a clew to the *rôle* played by genius—the power to give expression to national taste—in the civilizations of the ancients. That *rôle* in heathen countries we find to be taken up by Inspiration in Palestine. That intuition and that Revelation were alike occupied in the cultivation of the spiritual, in contradistinction to the purely intellectual, the emotional, the material, and, above all, the moral needs of man's nature.

But though as compared with the spiritual, the didactic moral inculcation of the Old Testament is overshadowed, yet is that one feature—its moral standard—enough and more than enough to justify

the contempt now felt for all other peoples when named in conjunction with the Hebrews. What is most striking in genius is not its affinity with religion, but its lack of union with morality. And what is most characteristic of the inspired page of the Bible is its unyielding determination, despite human opposition of the most inveterate kind, to join the spiritual with the moral. But it would not be nearer the truth to say the Hebrews were the most moral of mankind than to say they were the most spiritual of mankind. Both the moral and the spiritual were superinduced, not natural. The subjective disposition was in all nations the same, the objective ideal altogether different.

So completely are we of this age possessed with the idea of the inseparable union of religion and morality that we are unwilling to acknowledge that the one can exist without the other. Attentive study of what has been aptly styled the Science of Humanity compels that acknowledgment.

None deny that the Greeks divined the Beautiful, as no people ever did before or after them, and it is superfluous to remind any of the indissoluble union of their genius and religion. So completely are all occupied with this, that seldom, if ever, is brought to light how miserably meager were their conceptions of morality. Their myths (considered the highest expression of those held in common by the Indo-European nations) are full of immorality

of the grossest type,* and, hideous thought! the gods themselves were immoral. They were thieves, liars, drunkards, treacherous truce-breakers, murderers, adulterers, seducers. Power, the least god-like, most demoniacal of attributes was the one thing the Greek was taught to worship. But "vice armed with sacred authority descended in vain from the eternal abodes." Feeble was the moral intuition, but marvelous was the strength of the æsthetic instinct, which she found to repel her.

Starting out with a record full of the blackest crime, nothing in the Greeks has struck me so forcibly as the perfectly cool, deliberate, calculating way in which they came to the conclusion that immorality was inexpedient. No lofty sense of duty, no irre-

* While this is so of the more generally diffused myths, much more is it true of the local Greek legends. Athens and Sparta united in avowed admiration for cunning and treachery. Honesty and dishonesty were matters easily subordinated to the higher importance of dexterity and concealment. In Sparta it was the custom to teach children to steal. The Attic legend concerning Ulysses and Palamedes treats of nothing but deception, Ulysses treacherously taking the life of Palamedes because he had detected his simulated insanity. The Legend of Canacê and Macareus, gives, if not a sanction, an authorized interest to the story of a guilty passion. The Legend of Athamas authorized human sacrifices, a practice based upon this senseless story continuing in Orchomenos until the time of Plutarch. Indeed it would seem from the many, many legends demanding life that ingenuity must have been taxed to its utmost to invent pretexts for cruelty.

sistible might of conscience swayed that brilliant intellect. But something that was not of earth, something that had not to do with material comfort, selfish luxury, or even political greatness was powerful enough to lift them above the horrors of the foulest moral atmosphere, and elevate them in the scale of being for all time. But to cut short this historical inquiry : the question reiterates itself : Why does the love of the Beautiful precede that of the Right ? For wherever we turn the leaves of past ages we find man more fully developed on every side than the moral one. The philosophy of the human mind simply testifies to the existence of a moral intuition. It does not tell us, as history does, of the fatal flaw which exists in that intuition. It tells us that everywhere man recognizes a distinction between right and wrong. It cannot be expected to reveal, as history does, the awful failure to illustrate that perception in actual life. All the traditions, revelations, instincts and historical records of the human race point to a time when man sustained a moral injury. And when we remember that everything that makes for human happiness, welfare and prosperity is totally dependent on morality, we see that nothing can account for the neglect of this but a deep-seated, ineradicable moral malady dating back to the progenitors of the race.

But in studying the nature and character of genius we find that a merciful Creator has not seen fit to permit man to stumble along by the feeble glimmering of

a perverted moral instinct. He may be as imperatively called back to his Creator by the love of the Beautiful as he could be by the love of the Right.* Do you weary of the insatiable demands of Art? Look at the claims of the moral law and then at those of the Beautiful! Genuine morality is so noble, so magnificent, so altogether an improbable attainment of humanity, that I doubt whether it is understood even in our own day. I know that some of the grandest intellectual power the world has known has been brought to bear upon the elucidation of this attainment as described in St. Paul's Epistles, but I doubt whether many as yet freely soar to the conception of a righteousness which, in its abundant fulfilling, is independent of the law.

If, then, we acknowledge such to be the fact after the conception has been set forth, what could we expect of mankind in ages when it was unheard of? For the ideal of a morality uninforced by Christianity is not adapted to elicit the noblest qualities of human nature. And although we have seen reason to discard a belief in anything like an intellectual infancy of the race, yet is there most undoubtedly to be traced a capacity for moral progress independ-

* The subject of psychical renovation or regeneration is not touched upon here. We have confined the attention to the purely natural influences of these intuitions considered objectively: the natural being considered as answering a purpose not foreign or contrary to the supernatural, but simply a subordinate and dissimilar purpose.

ent of that progress itself. Here, then, the childhood of the individual offers aid in understanding that of the race. When we first enter the moral realm it is upon that which is harsh, stern, unrelenting, pitiless. We are oppressed and burdened not only by the recognition of obligation, but a thousand times more so by the sense of shortcoming, the painful consciousness of failure. Taken at its very start, the moral instinct appeals to us through motives of the most intense self-interest. Moral attainment at this rudimentary stage of the nation or the being has a contracting effect, promoting self-esteem at the expense of warmer sympathies, nobler aspirations and more ardent affections.

Now contrast this with the gracious, laughter loving realm of the Beautiful. See man enter it all unconscious of inexorable Law : see him abandon himself to it from motives of the most disinterested nature that can be imagined, and observe him as he recognizes more and more clearly the Divine Power which constitutes the essence of all that is truly beautiful or sublime.* “ Only in this sphere of voluntary activity,” says Schiller, “ when under no compulsion of necessity or conscience, is it possible for man to put forth his whole, that is, his ideal self.”

* This idea has been elaborated by Schiller in his “Letters on the *Æsthetic Education of Man*”; but in justice to the great author as well as to myself, I must here state that, as given above, it had been fully established in my mind before I was aware that any one had written on the subject.

Not only, then, to supply the vacuum created by moral delinquency, but because the moral impulsion is one of constraint, and freedom is the vital breath of the spiritual life, does the love of the Beautiful predominate to the almost total exclusion of moral motives in the real childhood of the world. Surely it is possible to go further. Morality in its first developments must have to do with this life. Now the spiritual nature being cultivated, subordinately but inevitably, by the aid of these two God-given intuitions, it is at once evident that the one having earliest sway in the order of time must be that which has the most readily recognized affinity with that nature. This, as we have seen, is the æsthetic intuition. To what other purpose can this apparent waste of mental energy be ascribed than to the elevation, purification, and glorification of man's spiritual nature?

But this past precedence implies subsequent conflict: for I have called attention to the fact that moral attainment now occupies the place once held by genius. The History of this conflict is undoubtedly one of the primal constituents in a true History of the race. At this stage of the world's History we cannot but view it from a prescribed stand-point—circumscribed as we shall see by the moral revolutions produced in the Establishment of Christianity, the Invention of Printing, the Intellectual Education of Women and the Study of Natural Science.

The works of Art through which the intellectual

life of the ancients chiefly displayed itself were not more undeniably connected with spiritual aspiration than they were with moral degradation. Licentiousness, drunkenness, gambling, the sacrifice of children to devils, the enslavement and debasement of the weak, the total destruction of everything like mutual trust and affection, war with all its train of horrors, treachery and infidelity of every description were among the evils tacitly, if not openly, enjoined by the moral (or, rather, immoral) systems of those ages, and many of these revolting vices formed a part of the religious worship which took place in temples adorned with every glory the genius of man could lavish on them.* It is not for an instant to be supposed that the ancients were unaware of this contradiction. Moral perception was simply in abeyance, not extinct. Not only the works of genius themselves, but such fragments of literature, tradition and oral teaching as have survived the ages all testify to this discernment, and it is impossible to believe that the inevitably unhappy results of immorality did not produce some effect upon the judgment of each succeeding gener-

* Diana was propitiated by placing a young man upon her altar and whipping him until his entrails could be seen through the quivering flesh. Dionysius was invoked by a drunken frenzy terminating often in the loss of life itself, to say nothing of the loss of self-respect. Of the Elusinian Mysteries in the Temples of Ceres, it is simply impossible for any one to speak or write.

ation, though the suffering the world has caused itself by its wilful wickedness is, even yet, more the theme of sentimental pity than of stern reprobation.

The vices which if once committed by a single person in the Bible seem to horrify and shock many modern minds were (and are) the habitual, customary and acknowledged acts of all the idolatrous nations. Idolatry itself is essentially and emphatically immoral. Conceptions of the Beautiful, the Sublime, the Eternal find no affinity with Idolatry. You will always find the grotesque, the absolutely comical and the horrible connected with this. In nature and animal worship no artistic representation was demanded; nor is it at all probable that there were numerous representations of Deity before the time of the Greeks. The primitive memorial was often nothing more than a board, a stone or a post. It is a significant fact that all attempt at artistic representation of Deity prior to the Greeks was a signal failure. This I believe to be entirely owing to the combined personality and morality involved in the conception. Pure abstract ideas, such as are involved in Architecture, called forth the noblest energies. But when it came to the portrayal of a Moral Being, total incapacity was revealed. Sculpture was the chosen Art of the Greeks precisely because their ideas of Personality were more clearly defined than those of any other people. Their statues were not objects of worship in the same sense as those of China, Egypt, or

India. Theirs was preëminently a subjective mind. Hence we find in their history the culmination of this conflict between the æsthetic and the moral intuitions.

The Greeks, it must be remembered, were not at all contemptuous of the good to be obtained out of this earthly existence. It did occur to them that mental power could be more acceptably applied to the solution of the problems involved in character and destiny than in any other way. But their Literature, no less than their Sculpture, testifies to a complete failure to realize this aspiration. Nothing more unsatisfactory can be conceived than the representation of life and its tragic issues as set forth in the Greek Drama. Magnificent thoughts, evincing the grandest conceptions of Divine Power, the terrible strength of human emotions, as well as their god-like and immortal tenderness, are scattered broadcast and conveyed through a medium which all acknowledge to be the most exquisite instrument thought has known. But anything like a consoling, consistent, harmonious conception of either human or Divine *character* is wholly lacking.

In Sculpture their genius did not attempt to grapple with the complex emotions excited by real life. We speak of that Art in its maturity and vigor, not in its decline. It is its glory that the name of every prominent divinity or deified hero and heroine might be changed to the personification of a single attribute of character. But when we ask its moral value, we

find that all its virtues are of a negative, passive kind. Its charm is that it represents passionless character. It is the absence of the human, naturally ungovernable feeling that constitutes its greatness. The very marked incongruity between the life and the Art of this people has led to the most erroneous conclusions that have ever been drawn from a study of the Beautiful. Distinguished writers, quoting the testimony of such contemporaries of the times as Socrates, Cato, and Plutarch, make the statement that the works of Sculpture were productive of a corruption of feelings and morals that is scarcely credible. This I believe to be an illustration of the extent to which Truth may be distorted. It was not the Sculpture itself that corrupted character. Nor, if we may believe those who have made the most careful study of the subject, was it the manner of life which the Greeks thought necessary for the proper cultivation of this Art. Their apotheosis of the body may seem to us even more worthy of condemnation than its opposite extreme—that degradation of the body which was advocated in the Middle Ages—and in any case must seem petty and childish. But no one can look on the fragments of Art that remain and believe they were ever capable of producing corrupt feeling. The Venus de Medici herself might be recognized under the title of Modesty—or rather, let us say, an exalted Purity which knows nothing of the sense of shame. All artists worthy of the name understand their province, and

when they overstep its bounds and try to make the immoral admirable, no connoisseur, be he gifted with superhuman energy, can get such work admitted to the world's Parnassus. Those who fear deleterious effects from too great familiarity with the nude statues of Greece or any country that has imitated Greece* do not apprehend the true scope and aim of Sculpture. The nude figure in Painting is objectionable for the very reason that it is not so in Sculpture—that it cannot be idealized to the same advantage. The relation which the marble statue bears to the living form has been compared by a favorite author to that which a winter's day bears to its “sister of the happier time.” The sense of beauty it awakens is more abstract: “it lifts the soul into

* The employment of “life-models” in Schools of Art has given rise to much controversy and is deemed thoroughly demoralizing by many who have thought and written on the subject. While it is undeniable that *some* evil influences must accompany the practice, we must in fairness face the fact that the objections urged are to be ascribed wholly to inveterate prejudice; for we find the same people not at all averse to the study of the human body in the practice of medicine, though it is a notorious fact that students of Medicine are more immoral than students of Art. If it be urged that the women who act as life-models are degraded by such a practice, this kind of demoralization has its parallel, also, in the attendance of male physicians upon women—a practice which to the unprejudiced mind is as revolting as any that can be named. And still further, if it be said that the good far outweighs the evil in this last custom and that we must learn to subordinate

a higher region than will summer day of lordliest splendor. It is like the love that loss has purified."

In the case of the Greeks, that the immoral tendencies of the age did not destroy *all* noble aspirations and blunt even the perception of the Beautiful excites the wonder of the unbiased mind. In modern times, taught as we are to look upon everything from a lofty moral stand-point, so prominently does this immoral association come before us that it has been allowed to usurp entire dominion, and consequently the best thought has never been brought to bear upon this subject. The true spiritual teaching of all works of genius has not been insisted upon. The power which should have been

the trivial to the essential, with how much more force can the artist urge the subordination of the physical to the spiritual and the comparatively evanescent effects of a practice, which, from the very nature of the case, must prevail on so limited a scale? We certainly believe that in countless cases prejudice and custom succeed perfectly in searing the moral delicacy of the physician and his patient, and we find it much easier to believe that enthusiasm and impersonality (for the model is invariably masked) do away with everything objectionable in the artist's studio. "Life study" may be condemned by the moralist on the ground that the Art of Sculpture is not in accordance with our modern civilization. But it is hard to see how it can be condemned by the non-professional on the charge of immorality while he condones or winks at similar practices of far more powerful influence, for this shows at once that he urges his objections simply because he does not care for Art.

drawn from this almost inexhaustible source has been lost : partly, of course, through the general inability to exercise that form of mental activity known as abstraction, but greatly through a mistaken zeal, *i. e.*, a systematic attempt to keep men from the cultivation of this power. It is no uncommon thing to see modern tourists turn away from the purest Greek Art—the Elgin Marbles, the Pallas of Velletri, the Hera of Polykleitos—to enthuse over a modern fancy of a Young Girl making her Morning Toilet. This is generally ascribed to a want of culture. It is nothing of the kind. The individual may not always be able to explain his candor : but there is undoubtedly a repulsive element in all the artistic works of the ancients—not only in those of Egypt and Assyria, but even in the “faultily faultless” works of Greece—something which grates upon the modern mind,—a lack of moral purpose, idea or desire.

The utilitarianism of the Greeks proved as a broken reed to rest upon, and as far as their own country was concerned, their brilliant civilization proved as great a failure as that of any other country. It is not necessary to try to postpone the crisis of this conflict of the intuitions to the time of Christianity. The world was ready and waiting for what the Germans call the “Religion of Morality”. The enlightened mind of that city which, in its mad endeavor to simulate a passion for the Beautiful, had gathered together 70,000 statues,—more statues, in fact,

than people—was fully aware of its lamentable weakness. One cannot but feel that the gloomy skepticism of Cæsar, Cicero and Cato was rather creditable to them than otherwise. What was there to excite faith of any kind? Statues were no longer representations of gods, but of men—and men who had sinned. The agony of Laocöon reflects the troubled mind of that age as it grappled with the awful mysteries of sin and suffering. Niobe reproaches the gods for envying the happiness of a mortal mother. Indeed, all declining Greek Sculpture, as well as mature and exultant Roman Art, anticipates the ascendancy of the moral idea over the æsthetic, and wherever this occurs the real reign of Art is over. The Romans tried to turn to Architecture for consolation. But here, alas! we see utilitarianism invading not only the life that was kept distinct from Art, but the Art itself. This with some notable exceptions, for in the noble old Pantheon all feel awed by spiritual influences, of no ordinary kind.

Latin Literature (in which the Roman genius took a still bolder flight) is indeed so magnificent in its mere form, and, for reasons unconnected either with Art or Morals, has since been found so valuable, that no possibility of its ever perishing has entered the thoughts of men. A discussion of its moral value will be reserved for consideration until we speak of modern times. It is enough now to note that there is no more awful picture of life than that pre-

sented by the Romans in the zenith of their power. No apologies, be they glossed over with transcendent eloquence, avail to cover up the lamentable weakness of that life. Students of refined feeling and chastened thought have told me that the study of Roman History as depicted by Sallust, Cæsar, Merivale, and Gibbon has been so sickening and revolting to them, that, in their conscientious fulfilment of the required task, they were rendered physically ill.

When in the midst of gladiatorial shows, selfish, sensual luxury and spiritual degradation of the vilest kind prevailed : when suicide came to be admired and inculcated by the most enlightened minds of the age : when, in view of intellectual advantage, we may safely say, moral character had reached its lowest abyss, then indeed the world was ready for Christianity. This is not the epoch of conflict between Genius and Morality, but of union, in so far, at least, as union is possible.

Peace, purity in the domestic relations, unselfishness, temperance, spiritual worship, the equality and brotherhood of all men in the eyes of God, and hence the elevation of the poor, despised, enslaved classes ; the sure and certain hope of a blessed life beyond the grave ; boundless faith in One who had lived on earth as man, and hence renewed faith in humanity—these were the substitutes Christianity offered for the so-called ideals and real vices of Paganism.

Theoretically, what could appear more antagonistic to Art as it had been known than Christianity? Practically, how would Art have been resuscitated but for Christianity?

For a time, indeed, all was dark and drear. There were noble abstract speculations in the world,—in Stoicism, and Neo-Platonism as well as in Christianity. But the mighty force of the new morality, from the fact that it touched the most intimate, personal, intense thoughts, feelings and desires of our being, bore all before it. Error and fanaticism became more and more glaring in proportion to the intensity of the moral struggle, and as darkness is never so dark as when brought in juxtaposition with light, many have been utterly overcome by the darkness and unable to perceive, still less to rejoice, in the light. The idea of making religion—the religion of morality—the vocation of a few, while the rest of the world indulged in the grossest sensuality, has seemed to some minds the culminating error not only of that period, but in the history of the world. The mistake could not have been made had not the plane of being been changed, shall we not say elevated?

The great characteristic of the Christian Era from its very start is the prominence it gave and gives to the individual man. The History of the world, the experiment of evolving or educing character, seems to begin over again on a different basis, of which this is the feature. In Egypt, Assyria,

China, Hindostan, even in Homeric Greece, as well as in Carthage and Phœnicia we find a civilization, says Grote, "in mass, without the acquisition of any high mental qualities or the development of any individual genius : the religious and political sanction, sometimes combined and sometimes separate, determined for everyone his mode of life, his creed, his duties, and his place in society, without leaving any scope for the will or reason of the agent himself." * All of this was done away with by the Christian religion. Each individual must solve the problem of life for himself. Upon this basis Art is revived and genius is henceforth estimated. Here, again, we see reënacted the entire order of things involved in the relation of genius to morality. Hitherto we have studied the attitude of the age or the nation towards the Beautiful. Now we come to the far more

* The one notable exception to all this—the History of the Hebrew people—forces itself upon the attention here, as in so many other instances. In no connection do we see the Divine origin and unity of Judaism and Christianity more clearly than in this. The religious and political sanction in the Jewish system gave the greatest possible scope for the will and reason of the individual. In the fact that their people, their masses, knew what it was to enjoy literature, music, domestic life, etc. we see how totally unlike that of other nations was the objective ideal set before the Jews, and how the moral character of this ideal prepared the way for the establishment of Christianity and made it impossible, humanly speaking, for any other people to receive and propagate it.

weighty consideration of the attitude of the individual. Now we scrutinize the man.

It is impossible to avoid the acknowledgment that here, too, ability to divine the essence of the Beautiful (that is, its spiritual element) is not attained in virtue of moral character. Under the influence of Christianity men entered the domains of both Art and Morals with a ten-fold impetuosity: and Morality, in so far as it constituted the indispensable element of the New Religion, exercised a sway in Art never known before. But as in the destiny of the Ancients the love of the Beautiful affected spiritual aspiration, rather than practical life—for the express purpose of demonstrating the superiority of the spiritual over the moral element in religion,—so here, too, it sways the individual heart. It is not necessary to refer to the lives of Cellini, Ribera, Machiavelli, Titian, the Borgias, the Medici, and so on through a long list of names irrevocably connected with the might and majesty of Art. Taine has given us a picture of life as it was in the days when Art had reached its climax. I do not think anyone will feel inclined to uphold it as the representation of a moral life.

Was not this permitted that no loop-hole of escape might be left as to this vital question of morality and beauty? Guido, who, in expressing depth of emotion, melting tenderness and heart-rending sorrow (especially in characterizations of the Madonna and in Crucifixions) has touched the universal human heart, is said to have killed a man in

a pure burst of artistic enthusiasm to obtain the proper expression for a Crucifixion, coolly finishing the work while his fellow-man struggled with his dying agony. When we remember the subjective and objective "motiv" of the picture, this may well stand for the acme of the tragic antithesis of Art and Morals.

But, turning towards another view of the subject, we remember a name which in its glorious spotlessness seems almost able to redeem the corruption of an age. Of course I mean that of Michael Angelo. Yet it is a significant fact that "he who was so good, so religious, so pure-minded and so high-minded" did not succeed in giving the world any satisfying representation either of Mary or of Christ—the highest themes Art ever can or will know. This suggests one of the profoundest thoughts that can engage the human mind—the probability that the true grandeur of the spiritual life can only be revealed to man through sin. Can any but the tired tell of rest? Who but a penitent could paint Divine Forgiveness? Mrs. Jameson suggests a solution of Michael Angelo's failure in the idea that his morals escaped the pollution of the age at the expense of his imagination. I think his own essential moral purity would have rendered it impossible in any age for him to depict the Friend of Sinners. I do not apprehend anything dangerous in this idea. For no one ever will contemplate elevating the world by means of deliberate sin. But we who are at liberty

now to ask the meaning of the apparent union of genius with immorality, and must account for it (for every life is influenced by this question), cannot fail to find a wonderful satisfaction in this explanation. The genius of Ruskin reminds one of Michael Angelo's, proving that this question has nothing to do with any particular age. There is something so pure, so cold, unsympathetic and uncompassionate in the conscious rectitude of such natures, that we feel at once they can never fathom all that is in the human heart or bring the world any real message of comfort. Hawthorne, in the guise of a dreamy romance and under the veil of an inapproachable indefiniteness, boldly advances the idea that there are natures which can only awake to a consciousness of moral responsibility by sinning; that it is possible to rise in the scale of being through crime. George Macdonald's eagle-eyed penetration divines the essence of the Gospel teaching to be summed up in the enunciation that "no indulgence of passion destroys the spiritual nature so much as respectable selfishness;" the logical conclusion of which is that morality may even act as a barrier to the comprehension of a higher form of life. The very shamelessness with which Byron exposes *all* that is in his heart is a guarantee for the consciousness of some spiritual nobility. I feel perfectly safe in saying this, for the morbid scrutiny to which Byron's immoral life has been subjected has brought about an almost universal depreciation of his genius,

and it may be well to state the case as strongly as possible if only to test the possibility of reawakening an interest in that immortal genius. It is certainly an intensely interesting thing to find that Byron's best Poetry (and no one asks that any but the best should be read) is penetrated and interpenetrated with the sturdiest old English Theology—that noble conception of spiritual and moral union in religion which has withstood tests innumerable and still triumphs over opposition of every kind: so that while there may be emotional scepticism, bearing fruit in actual immorality, there is the firmest intellectual faith in that idealism which is at the foundation of all goodness. Intellectual generosity and spiritual magnanimity are taxed to the utmost when, confronted by Rousseau's disgusting, loathsome life, we are asked to acknowledge that he has said some of the most deeply and truly religious things that it has ever entered the thoughts of man to utter.

While the same phase of the fact may present itself at any time in the world's history, we take the development beginning with the Christian Empire and culminating in the Sixteenth Century as especially designed to show the world that Art does not exist in the interests of morality. There is a finality about the experiment then made which silences the very idea of any repetition. If as the exponent of a Religion whose cardinal feature is morality it could accomplish so little (and that by means the

most indirect imaginable) for the moral welfare of the race, there is no doubt about its failure when joined to any other interest.

Not only were all the Arts—Architecture, Sculpture Painting, Music and Poetry—"born again" through Christianity; human destiny itself was metamorphosed. But not until every other phase of self-development had proved a mockery did it dawn upon the mind of man that of all attainments morality is incomparably the noblest; and that of all lofty attainments from none are men farther removed by nature than from this noble acquisition. Life, practical, prosaic, daily life is found, after all, to demand the sublimest energies we can possibly put forth; and henceforth the gifts which do not tend towards a solution of this problem are consigned to a position of marked inferiority. When we recall some of the evils that have existed on earth as an established order of things, affecting (*i.e.* making wretched) the destiny of millions;—still more, when we remember as a matter of knowledge before experience, that there is no sin of which we are not capable, and draw the comparison with what is now going on in the civilized countries of the globe, we are forced to confess that there is something rather admirable in human nature after all; or, better still, that but for a Divine superintendence, our race must long ere this have perished ignominiously.

The Invention of Printing, to which I have as-

signed a revolutionizing influence, though brought about most indirectly by moral motives, and attaining the maximum of its power only after the lapse of considerable time, is undoubtedly to be estimated at its origin as one of the greatest factors in the interests of morality which the world has known. *Humanity* is the Scholastic definition of Literature, and in this we see the anticipation of all that was to be involved in the great discovery which went hand in hand with the Revival of Learning and the Great Reformation.* Before this there had been nothing to excite a wide-spread, far-reaching intellectual activity, nor anything comparable to an intelligent discussion of personal interests ; and though this was only gradually effected, the tendency made itself perceptible from the very start.

We see the effects of this tendency in the decline of enthusiasm for Art. Italy, Spain, Holland, France, and even Germany had exercised a magic sway over the human mind by means of Art. It remained for England, more than ordinarily deficient

* My reason for not dwelling upon the Protestant Revolution as a cause of moral progress (and, consequently, artistic decline) is that I wish never to lose sight of the fact that this Reformation originated *in* the Church ; not out of it, as too many are in the habit of thinking. It was an essential development of the Religion of Morality, and the student of History is perfectly familiar with the many anticipations of it all along the ages.

as a nation in artistic perception, and conversely, superior to any people on the globe in moral attainment and enthusiasm, to discover to the world its most valuable treasure and its most enduring glory. A world of thought lies enshrined in the beautiful allegory of "Corinne," in which the characters of Oswald and Corinne personify England and Italy, each utterly incapable of understanding the other on these all-important subjects of the Beautiful and the Right. But if England has had to go to other countries for Art and must always see her own Art estimated upon other than artistic grounds, it is quite as true that other nations must come to her to understand all that is best in life itself. Such an experiment as that of Puritanism could never have been made in a nation whose grand characteristic was not morality. Instead of violent and lasting reaction against such fanaticism, we find on the side of this only a passing recoil, and on the side of Art only the clinching of ineradicable prejudice. Men were not far enough removed from the immediate effects to judge dispassionately of the final consequences of the great question which was then uppermost before the world: has genius more affinity with evil than with good? Hence the Puritans decided that it had. They saw that genius was not allied with morality, and so transcendently important did the Right seem to them, that they undertook the task of destroying, blighting, denying all those more subtle, spiritual, disinterested sources of thought

and feeling which have to do with the Beautiful. Puritanism was a thousand times more iconoclastic than Protestantism. It aimed not at the vesture, but at the very spirit of Art. In this, of course, it overreached itself. But the wonder is that it did not give the pleasure-loving world a new and lasting impetus toward vice. Who but the phlegmatic English could have gotten all the good that was to be obtained, made the best that could be made, out of such an experiment, and stood "erect and free" when extricated from such toils? The influence of Puritanism has extended wherever the English language is spoken: its formal morality has so triumphed over the spiritual perceptions which are allied with the æsthetic intuition, and so permeated English Literature, that not only have other nations—particularly France—given the world incontestably finer Devotional Literature, but there are wanting in the English language, itself, words to express the more elevated, purified, spiritualized experiences of the soul.

But this English earnestness has had an incalculable influence, and has compelled the few who could understand its significance to tell the world—since no compromise of these ideals could be effected,—the real meaning to be found in Art. The Germans glory in the fact that their own great countryman was born into the world to respond to this demand and boldly tell it that "Art has no aim." This is justly considered one of the grand-

est contributions that has been made to modern thought. That Art should exist for itself—should contain within itself something able to account for and justify its existence—forces all who can think at all into the very strongholds of Thought.

As if to reinforce the awakening conviction, the Art of Music is perfected in these latter days. And now recommences the old struggle, the vain endeavor to undertake to prove that Music is elevating to the character, refining and ennobling in social and domestic intercourse, morally beneficial to the nation at large. The poor old theory is almost torn to shreds by the practical defeats it has had to sustain. For if anything *is* proved, it is that Music is enervating to the character, constantly deprived of its ideal aims in social intercourse, and utterly powerless to help a nation (as in the case of Germany and Italy) rise in the scale of being. There is no influence so vague, evanescent and unpractical as that produced by Music. The boasted power of martial music lies in the inspiration of the moment: it may help a man to do what he has already resolved to do: but no one pretends that this passing enthusiasm is the real instigator of action: and no one ought to be permitted to forget that the “Marseillaise” was sung in suppressing the Insurrection of La Vendée. This last attempt to make Art accomplish what nothing but strenuous, painful, individual moral effort can do utterly breaks down under the demand. Now all are beginning to see that if

practical good is to come from Music, it must be when that Art leans for support upon the most firmly established morals, and not when used as a lever for the elevation of morals.

The world can no longer trust to the vague intellectual influences that have ever addressed themselves to the few. Something must be done with the people—the great mass of mankind who labor that the few may enjoy. We will not say something must be done in self-defence. I want especially to call attention to the fact that by the natural unfolding of moral ideas under the guidance of Divine Providence the world recognizes the drift and tendency of its destiny. The man of intellect sees that if there is such a thing as progress it is from the Pyramid downward,—from the absorption of the inferior-many for the glory of the superior-few to the absorption of the superior-few for the glory of the inferior-many: from the admiration excited by the overpowering, the colossal in external manifestation, to that elicited by personal obedience to the “still, small voice.” Under the sway of this conviction the noble picture is transferred from the cloister to the Art-Gallery: that is, no longer forced into the service of an exclusive system, but brought out in the widest of all provinces, to stand upon its own merits and prove that it has a value for this age independent of all that has gone before. To know that this is proved we have only to look at the numbers who rush to Europe every year to worship at

the shrine of Art alone, utterly oblivious of the dogmas once bound up with the existence of that Art.

It is only by thus reviewing the past that I could hope to make my initiatory statement—that moral culture is the characteristic ideal of our age—fully understood. Having established this position relatively, it becomes no easy task to point out the actual steps in the progress indicated, for the great changes that have taken place in public opinion during the last half-century have followed each other with such lightning-like rapidity, that it is almost impossible to trace them.

One that has affected all our ideals and standards of life has been caused by the Intellectual Education of women. In General History women have always constituted a caste—this being the interpretation put upon physical constitution. All agree that the intellectual power they have wielded has been indirect, underhanded, deceptive in form that it might be the more effective in spirit.* But the moral education of women has always received more attention than that of men, for whatever may

* The permission to cultivate the emotional at the expense of the intellectual nature gave such strength and impetus to the passions of women, that it would be almost impossible to determine now whether they ever had any such strength originally. The world thought it was profiting by this permission; none but the well read Historian knows how dearly it has paid for it.

be the sum-total of the as-yet undefined differences attributable to sex, we are beginning to formulate what must have acted as an unconscious motive in former times—the instinctive feeling that wickedness in women* is far more fatal to the general happiness than wickedness in men. Of course this moral education which the world confers has been conventional and, in the most pronounced sense of the word, superficial. But it has brought about no ordinary results. The first attempts in intellectual culture revealed the force of this training. As men then occupied the position of teachers in all but rudimentary knowledge, young women were obliged to have recourse to their instruction. But in studies dealing with Art and Character, to take but a single instance, as in the case of Latin Literature, this was found to be highly objectionable. No refined girl could make a thorough study of Horace, Ovid, Catullus or even Virgil with a gentleman without doing violence to her most sacred feelings of propriety. It was not until repeated failures proved

* There are not wanting those who assign an inferior moral perception to the sex as a sex. Indeed a distinguished educator, basing her system of instruction upon this idea—from which premise the necessity of superior and energetic moral training instantly follows—has frankly acknowledged this to be the cause of a very remarkable success in her Profession. But here, again, the bias given by ignorance, prejudice and absurd modes of thought must prevent anything like the formation of a satisfactory general theory.

the undesirability, if not impracticability, of this method, and brave women, calling into use all the skill and diplomacy of their natures to obtain the necessary knowledge and yet escape the concomitant confusion, succeeded in educating themselves as teachers, that women, as a class had access to Roman Literature. But the revelation that Ancient Literature had been written by men for men, extolled sins too abominable to think of even for an instant, held up for admiration and indulged itself in modes of thought and feeling which if now adopted would overthrow all our social and domestic happiness in a moment, in a word, was devoid of all pure morality, did not stop here. The very showing up of the contrast has not only excited the intensest admiration for the pure and sublime morality of the Old and New Testaments, but drawn the influence of that morality into all that is now considered good Literature. Compare the Victorian Literature with that of Queen Anne, no, with that of George IV. and William IV., and you will have no difficulty in discerning that the one possesses just what the other lacks—a moral earnestness and a consequent mental elevation which are to be ascribed wholly to the suggestions of educated women.

This comparison of Literatures, ancient and modern, called attention to the fact that there were in the world two distinct standards of morality,—one for women and one for men. This was as clearly

defined as the fact that there had been two standards of intellectual culture. Now it was dimly discerned from the very first that the change in the intellectual culture of women would necessitate the change in the moral attainment of men. And though this irritated the prejudices and excited the most violent opposition of both sexes, we have lived to see in the last fifteen years the most extraordinary changes that have ever been brought about in this direction. Nothing has so tested the strength of the moral impetus of our age as this. That it has successfully endured the test is something of which it may be justly proud.

Of women's actual moral work in Literature it would be impossible to treat within the scope of this article without digressing too widely from our subject. They have been accused of inaugurating a new epoch in Fiction and touching upon questions which are as perilous as they are unanswerable. But time alone can prove whether the said questions are unsolvable. In the mean time we study them with avidity.

One branch of their work in this direction is, however, too often overlooked. I mean their writings for the young. No estimate can possibly be made of the bias given to youthful character by such books as those of Mrs. Charles, Miss Yonge, Mrs. Carey Brock, Miss Sewell, Miss Tucker, and many others who have written scores of fascinating volumes, and invariably devoted their entire mental en-

ergy to the delineation of ideal moral character. So highly do I, myself, estimate the effect of such books, that I deem them an almost infallible safeguard for the youth of both sexes.

The supply cannot defeat the aims of the demand. *All* the arts are now pressed into the service of morality. Hence the most striking fact which presents itself in this age is that intellectual power is no longer expressed through the form of Art. We now recognize a distinct difference between genius and intellect. Genius sees intuitively, intellect experimentally. Genius belongs to the seer, intellect to the reasoner. The one acts instinctively, the other reflectively. Of course I do not pretend to say that we shall have no more works of genius. But I do say that genius has performed a work in the world which, as a whole, seems to be regarded as final: while all see that there is yet an immense amount of work for the intellect to accomplish, waiving a 'What then?' to the boundary lines of an illimitable future.

Intellectual power finds its medium in Literature to-day precisely because Literature, so far from existing for its own sake, is now the weapon in every shape and form of moral Reformation. Writing for the sake of writing, as it is called, now brings a weary, pitying kind of smile to every face. Still further, the identification of the author's personality with his writings is the theme of universal interest in Literature. It is safe to say moral

enthusiasm can go no farther than this. When ordinary readers must scrutinize, dissect, weigh, balance, condemn or extenuate the most intimate motives of a writer's life, we are forced to confess that everything is bounded by character.

Every generation is now demanding with reiterated intensity that the character of the writer shall correspond to the truth he inculcates. This explains the otherwise inexplicable failure of Goethe's influence. I do not know whether it would be possible for the charms of fancy to throw any glamor over his life. All that I do know is that what we learn of his life from his friends (though it is hard to believe G. H. Lewes was a friend) disgusts us forever with the man and all that he had to do or say : so that while there are a few who are able to appreciate and enjoy his intellectual enlightenment, the many scorn and despise it. Again, so gratefully is moral force of character perceived in Literature that Ruskin, coming before us as an Art-critic to make light of *The Transfiguration* and rave over Turner and the *Preraphaelites*, is embraced with tenderest affection,—not because the world is in the least affected by his artistic bigotry, but because in every line he reveals a noble, whole-souled sincerity and an absolute purity of character that are almost without a parallel in any age.

For a while people said: "What *is* the matter with Carlyle?" Now the very children are beginning to tell us: "Nothing in the world except that

he was not a Christian." And just so far as he lacked that practical application of truth in his own life, has his influence fallen powerless on this age. We can no longer speculate as to whether this practical application ever will be made. It has been made. Among many instances, we have an exquisite illustration of it in the life and genius of Frances Ridley Havergal. Though all the leading English Reviews, in which Miss Havergal's poems were wont to appear from time to time, called for a clear analysis of them at the time of her death, the critics studying these poems from an artistic stand-point confessed themselves greatly baffled. This is a striking instance in which the life must interpret the writings. The young girl who read Hebrew, Greek and Latin, easily carried off prizes in a German school when competing with Germans in their native language; threw her own hymns into French or Italian verse on the spur of the moment; excelled in Thorough Bass to the extent of surprising Hiller (the greatest Counter-pointest of the day) and in the Art itself to the extent of playing the whole of Handel, much of Beethoven and much of Mendelssohn without notes, took this brilliant intellectual power and made it serve the noblest purposes imaginable—purposes which an Angel might envy, if that were possible. I do not mean that she "exercised her talents for the highest good of others." Many have done that. Deliberately turning away from artistic expression, which she had proved *was*

in her power, and not simply to the work of spiritual exposition or lofty moral inculcation, this intensely energetic nature forced her entire mental ability to subordinate itself to the actual religious experience which she herself had known : so that she describes the writing of every line of her Poems as producing the impression upon herself of a special provision from Heaven. I do not believe it is possible to conceive of a more beautiful, a more perfect life than this, and its practical influence is incalculable. In Australia, in South America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific on our own broad continent, yes, wherever civilization has penetrated, the books of this noble writer have been carried, not simply to be read, but to be used as text-books in the school of life. What do we care that those who have at their command everything that the world can give should be entertained, enlivened, or even elevated by the grand and glorious expressions of genius in Art? We think it is time those who have nothing should be comforted.

The passion for Natural Science is an indication of the prevailing admiration for morality. The passion for glory and the passion for science are opposites ; the one is due to the lack of self-sufficiency, the other to the abundance of it. Science opens up a world of delight in which self, *i.e.* human personality, plays no part. It has turned men's thoughts away from that morbid self-introspection, that endless self-questioning which have to do

with the contemplative life of genius rather than the active life of morality. We do not say that the gain has been clear gain: only that morality has profited by the change. Scientists are almost invariably moral men, and there is much less variation in this type of character than in that of men who abandon themselves to Literature, in which sentiment so often triumphs over truth. One of the most remarkable phenomena of our age is the long continued controversy between Science and Theology. This could never have been brought about did not all men feel that the issues at stake have a practical, and, in this respect, an incommensurable value. So far from being deprecated, this should be regarded as one of the most hopeful signs of the times. So imperiously does the love of the Right now dominate mankind, that the Christian morality is as fully adopted by those who reject Christianity as by those who accept it. If the subject were not one of solemnity, it would be amusing to notice the many instances in which men of talent occupy themselves in repudiating the very Theological dogmas constituting the foundation of the morality they advocate. Fortunately for them there are others who will cherish and inculcate the doctrines necessary to the existence of their morality: and in the meantime no one has the least objection to their inconsistent admiration, inasmuch as it is so eminently practical.

The influence of Science in Literature (consid-

ered not as Art, but as the substitute for Art) is very striking. In past ages of our era many of the noblest and most gifted of mankind were so impressed with the idea that the One Admirable Life that had ever been lived was from a human point of view a failure, that they emulated each other in making their own lives failures. Now the influence of scientific modes of thought has done away with the ethics of self-mortification, and given us the far more difficult problem of self-development to solve.

Again, the directness, the efficacy, the self-sufficiency of Science, reacting upon the contempt already expressed for the futility of Art, have led men to face the most practical of all questions:—Does intellectual culture touch the conscience? The ancient poet felt that he lived under a dispensation which permitted him to acknowledge frankly that he “saw the best and yet pursued the worst,” a state of affairs which is justly considered disgraceful in the present age. The modern philosopher, after having passed in rapid, but magnificently comprehensive, survey all the branches of human learning, says: “So far as these branches of knowledge have been acquired, we have learned or been put into the way of learning our duty and our work in life: it still remains that what we know we shall be willing and determined to put in practice.” This noble spirit is now working its way into the strongholds of Philosophy itself, showing that the idea of Right is a perception of the reason, not a sentiment of the emo-

tions. Because intellectual power displayed itself as genius, that is, spontaneously, unaccountably, unrestrainedly as regards the moral sense, men in whom the love of the Right predominated turned away from the cultivation of the intellect, deeming it possible to act wisely by educating the moral nature only. And even yet there is a great deal of this spirit in the world (though one would think there had been enough failures to deter anyone from making another experiment)—of trying to make the moral nature accomplish what nothing but the intellect can do. Having no guarantee that the conscience will ever be able to act as a substitute for the intellect, they still demand that it shall, and hence have been led to the perpetration of follies, absurdities and even cruelties, which, in their turn, have excited the contempt of intellectual people for the abettors of religion and morality. The idea that the intellect is to be cultivated for the sake of the conscience is one which was not possible to the civilizations of past ages, and is to be regarded as the very glory of modern times. That there is a vital connection between the intellect and the conscience must be acknowledged when we are made to see that the perception of the relation in which we stand must precede the recognition of the obligation rising out of that relation. Intellectual stupidity is just as answerable as moral weakness for the wrong-doing in the world. Not only must all intellectual culture affect the conscience, making the individual feel a

responsibility corresponding to that culture, but every step in moral progress ought to affect the intellect, placing it under an obligation to exert its power to the utmost. Whenever this is not done, it is a fatal obstacle to the influence of that morality.

It may be a magnificent thing to be endowed with an inexplicable mental power which expresses just what it sees without note or comment: all feel that it is a far grander thing to be entrusted with a potential energy which it is in our power to use or not to use; to cultivate or not to cultivate; and this, every step of the way, for an end which is either worthy or not worthy. The idea that we have a moral duty to perform in cultivating the intellect to the utmost of its power is one which is just dawning on the world. But I hope we shall live to see the day when the best people will acknowledge that to cultivate the intellect with a noble end in view is the highest work to which anyone can be called. The world is beginning to ask derisively: "What is the use of the penetrating intellect if it cannot solve the problem of one life?" Mental indolence, in this light, becomes not only a sin, but the crowning sin; because it is a known fact that intellectual acumen can be made splendidly subservient to the moral and spiritual welfare of the individual and the world.

As the moral ideal is so much higher now than it has ever been before, one may naturally ask: "Is

the world then so much better to-day than it has ever been before ? ”

To this we reply : Yes, and No.

Of course the very existence of a noble ideal makes the world better. The fact that but one character has at any time attained a loftier elevation than was ever known in the world before is a glory to that time. But of course when the privileges, the possibilities and opportunities for moral progress are so great, and men refuse those privileges, we feel that they are worse than they could possibly have been without the opportunities. Moreover, there is something in the very presence of goodness among those who are determined to reject that goodness for themselves which evokes all that is worst in them. We see this not only by way of contrast (though of course this heightens the effect of both the darkness and the brightness of the picture), but in actual manifestation, whenever the world has taken a decisive step in morality. But be it so. The remarkable fact to which attention is now drawn is that this lofty moral standard is now for the first time borne by the leaders and teachers of the nations. It is true we have Nihilism, Communism, Socialism, as increasing evils. But these very evils are only misconceptions of the sublimest doctrines of Christianity, and the agitation of a people in regard to such questions is like the restlessness of the stream—a proof that its life-giving springs are pure, not foul and stagnant. We have suicide to an

alarming extent in this Nineteenth Century; but it is not inculcated by our men of greatest intellectual enlightenment, as in the palmy days of Latin Literature by Cato, Lucan, Cicero, etc. This pusillanimity does not prevail among our national leaders—as in Brutus, Antony, Cleopatra, etc. And so with other crimes. All feel that the world is in possession of a higher ideal than it ever had, and the acknowledgment that thousands come short of it does not alter the fact of its existence. There are individuals whose morality is so superior to that of the mass of mankind that to them it is totally incomprehensible: nevertheless, that incomprehensible goodness is a fact which none can afford to ignore.

Discovering the unsatisfactory nature of the two effete types of character—the one morally weak and therefore self-impelled toward the cultivation of the abstract rather than the concrete, the visionary rather than the real: the other morally strong only at the expense of that wider sympathy and comprehension which alone could make its morality helpful to the world—the greatest minds of this age have unequivocally confessed that a nobler ideal must be set before mankind. The external morality, the moral righteousness which rejoiced that it triumphed over the commission of outward, gross sin will not do. We must have a spiritual righteousness whose very essence is a consciousness of spiritual sinfulness, thereby placing all men upon the same footing in the sight of God: a righteous-

ness whose sympathy with weakness will ever be in proportion to its own increasing strength, and whose practical earnestness will not permit men to believe that any faculty, any power, any capacity of the human mind must be sacrificed for the caprice or fancied good of any other.

Instead of striving in vain to get a moral value out of Art—which the world has done solely in order to shift the burden of personal responsibility—this educated moral sense will lead us to see that every part of our nature is worthy of cultivation, and none more so than the æsthetic faculty. The world has received the benefit from Art unconsciously, as a child, not as a man. But it is not until we are able to comprehend its specific benefit that we can appropriate it with an end in view. While receiving the benefit unconsciously, Art has been so depreciated by all classes, that now, unless avowed moralists appear in its behalf, its claims will not obtain a hearing.

From Plato on through the ages there have been repeated attempts to reveal the real relation of the Beautiful to the Good. One whose very being was steeped in both has appeared in our own day to speak with the wisdom of a seer on this subject. Sidney Lanier, whose destiny received the seal of the poet's, and whose delicate, penetrating, exquisitely feminine genius (according to the customary designation of such types) elevated him far above his age and the comprehension of that age, made

it the object of his life to show the world that it will never understand the true meaning of Holiness—its Beauty,—until it solves the true meaning of the Beautiful,—its Holiness.

This is to take the life-principle of Art, which never could have had an existence had Art been cultivated for moral purposes, and make it subservient to the highest of all ends. Having first recognized that there is a spiritual realm, to which we are called by the simple enjoyment of the most disinterested sources of thought and delight that we can know, we may apply its principles to that code of morality, to which from the weakness of our mortal nature we turn only in extremity and through compulsion : and (conversely) having acknowledged that there are acts to be performed from a sense of inflexible duty, imperative obligation and inherent righteousness, we may rise to the conception of acts to be performed from a perception of harmony, innate loveliness, spiritual exaltation and self-obliterating delight.

Yes, there is a noble principle in all true devotion to the Beautiful. It is a sacred enthusiasm for something above and beyond all self-consideration, and in its disinterestedness it has blessed and purified human existence. Art-culture could never give fresh impulse to the moral life, because it appeals to a higher part of human nature, which if not touched in this way will not be by the lower appeals of authority and self-interest. But the

moral life can never attain its highest development until it is recognized^d as an established truth that we are called Heavenward by every noble impulse of our nature, and by aspirations reaching far beyond the narrow limits of our earthly destiny.





HISTORY IN LITERATURE.

M. DURUY, in his recently published "*Histoire de France*," has written : "Il y a deux Henri IV. : celui de la tradition et celui de l'histoire : l'un plus héroïque et grace à Voltaire plus populaire ; l'autre sous sa bonhomie madrée bien plus habile, et avec son caractère souple bien plus propre à lever un édifice croulant que ne l'eut été un caractère tout d'un pièce."*

Such a candid admission cannot but be impressive and suggestive. It leads History out of that dull, humdrum province to which it has been confined (even in the minds of scholars) into the great broad realms of universal Literature. And it shows us that there is an ideal as well as an actual march of events. For may we not justly translate "traditional" according to M. Duruy, as the effort to color events and characters by the imagination, instead of

* There are two Henry the Fourths ; the traditional one and the historical one ; the former more heroic and, thanks to Voltaire, more popular ; the latter under his dexterous good-nature much more capable, and with his supple character much better adapted to build up a crumbling edifice than a perfectly consistent character would have been.

so establishing them in visible form (no progressive nation having lacked such a form) as to forbid aught but the bare reality? Literature then becomes the grand repository not only of facts, but also of the idealizations which men have woven in and out of prosaic events by the wondrous power of the imagination. Of course there is a real and a fictitious element of tradition just as truly as of History, but here by a legitimate synecdoche the division is at once simplified.

Not only does the disposition to record past events constitute a distinct feature of rational instinct, but the study of the past, revealing, as it does, the moral laws on which man's existence reposes, must ever elevate and refine both the individual and the national intellect. In it we find, to pursue M. Duruy's thought more closely, the interpretations which men have put upon passing events as well as the bare and rugged outlines of the actual facts. With that longing for consistency and harmony which seems to be common to our race, men have striven to ignore inimical elements and leave on record conceptions which may be comprehended in a single representation. When a character is bad, the imagination says: "Let it be wicked, and a strange and startling fascination may be thrown around it." When a man is good, a wail bursts from the human heart that he is not perfect. So much for the rash judgments of the heart: for the lapse of time will show the thoughtful student

that the very character which the imagination sought to form was just the one incapable of enacting the *rôle* History demanded, and that those same inconsistencies which are deplored were precisely the component parts fitted to corresponding circumstances. This cannot but lead one to contemplate the intricate, complicated, involved character of our race-destiny : and it especially presents a fruitful thought to the student of Literature : for if Literature is the repository of both tradition and History, it becomes a duty of the first importance to preserve their lines of demarcation ; to consider the magnificent sequence of cause and effect ; to note the mysterious instruments of Providential choosing and to ponder over the regenerating strides of a progressive civilization.

Literature and History are so reciprocally related that the one is valueless without the other. But History responds much more clearly to the whys and wherefores of Literature than *vice versa* ; for History is synthetic, while Literature is analytic. It is but in our own age that the study of Literature in the form of History has begun to be popularized ; while a still more novel study is the History of Language as the chief element of Literature. Not even yet has this been attempted in our own tongue, where a noble field of labor awaits the gifted. Trench has but given a hint of one branch of this study. But the connection of the Latin and French languages and the history of their vicissitudes has

been made most fascinating in Brachet's "Grammaire Historique de la Langue Française"; Géroze's "Histoire de la Littérature Française"; Louis Moland's "Origines Littéraires" and "Les Principaux Écrivains Français" of Antoine Roche. To me it is a fact full of significance that this study should have reached its highest development in the two languages which play so great a rôle in the history of civilization—the one the spoken tongue of that vain-glorious empire called by its elated devotees "the world"; the other by the common consent of the civilized nations of modern times, chosen to be the idiom of universal communication, and, as M. Géroze says: "porter sur tous les points du globe, avec des généreux sentiments, des pensées lumineuses et fécondes."

One of the most suggestive thoughts which I have found in this study has been the explanation it at least intimates of the world-wide meed of approbation which certain literary efforts have obtained. It is the exquisite adaptation of the language to the subject-matter, not as the work of individual genius, but from the political history necessarily involved in both the language and the subject. This, it is evident, renders a work unique and incapable of repetition; it must stand alone and form a marked feature of that life that

"Like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

Many have detailed the campaigns of war, but the Commentaries of Cæsar know no kindred. Senatorial and forensic eloquence has had brilliant champions, but no traitor has been so gloriously immortalized as Catiline. Hear Horace, when with poetic prescience, under the figure of a ship of state fitted to destruction, he describes the hollow glory of imperial Rome :

“ O navis referrent in mare te novi
Fluctus! O quid agis? Fortiter occupa
Portum !

Non tibi sunt integra lintea,
Non di, quos iterum pressa voces malo,
Quamvis Pontica pinus,
Silvae filia nobilis,
Jactes et genus et nomen inutile,
Nil pictis timidus navita puppibus
Fidet. Tu, nisi ventis
Debes ludibrium, cave.”*

The Pontic pine, affording now a lineage so un-availing, brings immediately before us the once powerful Mithridates,—Sylla, Marius, Lucullus and

* “ O ship, will the waves again bear thee sea-ward! O what art thou doing? Bravely remain in the harbor. There are no whole ropes within thy rigging. The gods, whom, overcome with evil, thou invokest again and again, are not favorable to thee. Although of Pontic pine, daughter of a noble forest, thou art tossed about and both thy race and thy name are useless. The timid sailor trusts not in thy painted stern. Unless thou wouldst give sport to the winds, beware.”

Pompey, and the last desperate struggles of a devoted people, and surely the application of the figure is full of deep and soul-stirring pathos. Horace is not the volatile lover, the flippant Epicurean he would have us deem him. The patriot pierces through all guises and disguises, and only as the lover of the Republic and the simple tastes generated and fostered by Republicanism does he still live in men's hearts.

Again, poetic homage has often been offered in mellifluous numbers; but what fascinating fiction more than Virgil's has made the world feel: "*Sunt lacrimæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*"*

It is impossible to deny that one of the secrets of the literary value of the Latin language is its marvelous capability to convey the thoughts and ideas which mirror the history of Rome's greatest epoch. The idea that interest in the study of Latin is based upon the philological benefit to be derived from it is from the necessity of the case a fiction. Enthusiasm in Philology is the effect and not the cause of linguistic research. That strangely fascinating study of the past, which awakens the sentiment of universal brotherhood and which, strange to say, has preceded all the renovating and reformatory epochs in History, creates an unquenchable desire to trace such knowledge to its fountain-head. As

* There are tears for misfortunes everywhere, and whatever is human affects the human mind,

the significance of History is developed, a corresponding advance in the aims of literary culture becomes inevitable. It is not History as history, but Literature as history that has given Latin authors the precedence they maintain. The history in Cicero's Orations, from the very indirectness of its character, supersedes in interest the fervid eloquence, the dauntless patriotism, the strength of will and courage with which those pages glow. When for the third time Cicero's indignation on the discovery of indisputable proof of a detestable conspiracy leaps its bounds, and he seeks to lay bare before the excited people the measures he has taken for the preservation of their lives, he says :

"Itaque ut comperi legatos Allobrogum, belli Transalpini et tumultus Gallici excitandi causa, a P. Lentulo esse sollicitatos, eosque in Galliam ad suos cives eodemque itinere cum literis mandatisque ad Catilinam esse missos, comitemque iis adjunctum T. Volturcium, atque hinc esse ad Catilinam datas literas, facultatem mihi oblatam putavi ut tota res non solum a me, sed etiam a senatu et a vobis manifesto deprehenderetur. Itaque hesterno die L. Flaccum et C. Pomptinum, prætors, fortissimos atque amantissimos rei publicae viros, ad me vocavi: rem omnem exposui; quid fieri placeret, ostendi. Illi autem, qui omnia de republica præclara atque egregia sentirent, sine recusatione ac sine ulla mora negotium susceperunt, et, quum advesperascent, occulte ad pontem Mulvium pervenerunt, atque ibi in proximis villis ita bipartito fuerunt, ut Tiberis inter eos et pons interesset. Eodem autem et ipsi sine cujusquam suspitione multos fortes viros eduxerunt, et ego ex præfectura Reatina complures delectos adolescentes, quorum opera utor assidue in re publica, præsidio cum

gladiis miseram. Interim, tertia fere vigilia exacta, quum pontem Mulvium cum magno comitatu legati Allobrogum ingredi inciperent unaque Volturcius, fit in eos impetus; educuntur et ab illis gladii et a nostris. Res erat prætoribus nota solis; ignorabatur a ceteris."*

Is not this word-painting to an almost marvelous degree? If these Orations against Catiline were extemporaneous, as has been supposed, they can scarcely come under the head of literary efforts, but they reveal still more strikingly the wealth and virility of a language that could thus meet the exigencies of the hour, and paint, in so few terse sentences, thoughts glowing with repressed excitement.

As civilization advances and the details of life

* Therefore when I found out that ambassadors of the Allobroges had been tampered with by P. Lentulus, for the sake of arousing a war across the Alps and disturbances in Gaul, and that they had been sent into Gaul to their fellow-citizens by the same road with letters and messages to Catiline and that T. Volturcius had joined them as a companion and that letters to Catiline had been entrusted to him, I thought that an opportunity was offered me for bringing it about that the whole matter should be openly checked not only by me, but also by the senate and by yourselves. And so yesterday I summoned L. Flaccus and C. Pomptinus, the prætors, most brave and patriotic men: I explained the whole affair; I showed them what I thought ought to be done. And they who had always entertained the most lofty and ennobling sentiments concerning the republic, without excuse or any delay undertook the affair, and when evening approached secretly went to the Mulvian bridge and there divided them-

multiply, we must ever be burdened with a language remarkable for its redundancy. Latin is characterized by its inflexibility. And the age of its greatest glory was (not altogether in a paradoxical sense) one of inflexibility. When after eight years of atrocious warfare Cæsar writes: "His rebus gestis, omni Gallia pacata, tanta hujus belli ad barbaros opinio perlata est, uti ab his nationibus, quæ trans Rhenum incolerent, mitterentur legati Cæsarem, qui se obsides daturas, imperata facturas, pollicerentur"* —and the laws, institutions and language of the inflexible conquerors were imposed on "pacified Gaul," little could the wildest imagination have dreamed that by that imposition the most inflexible

selves into two parties among the neighboring country houses in such a way that the Tiber and the bridge were between them. Moreover at the same time they themselves led forth many brave men without arousing the suspicion of anyone, and I myself sent from the præfecture of Reate many chosen youths armed with swords, as a guard, whose assistance I often used in the republic. Meantime when the third watch had almost elapsed, when the ambassadors of the Allobroges with a great retinue together with Volturcius set foot upon the bridge, an attack was made upon them; swords were drawn both by their men and by ours. The affair was known to the prætors alone; to the rest it was unknown."

* These things having been done, all Gaul having been pacified, so great an opinion of this war was reported to the barbarians, that from those nations who live beyond the Rhine ambassadors were sent to Cæsar, who promised that hostages should be given, orders should be obeyed.

language was to grow into the most flexible, and by the very means of its conquest the crushed nation was to sweep the conquering one into oblivion. Roman civilization became effete from its inability to cope with the progressive ideas of the Teutonic nations. Charles Kingsley, who has stamped his individuality so indelibly upon our century, has demonstrated that the social and domestic manners which characterize modern times are of German origin and were utterly unknown among the Latin nations. Until within the last half-century History was written as if modern civilization was but the prolongation of Roman civilization. But their severance is as complete and as effectual as can be imagined.

Roman authors sought to treasure every tradition that could lend a luster to their country's annals. Do we deplore the lack of contemporary poets during the desperate struggle between Rome and Carthage? We need not, for "the destruction of Carthage," says Bosworth Smith, "is the Second Book of the *Æneid* in stern and simple fact." "The great Roman poet needed not to draw upon his imagination for a single detail of his splendid picture of the fall of Troy. The burning and the slaughter, the crash of falling houses, the obliteration of a wealthy and an ancient city which had held imperial sway for many, nay for 700 years—it was all there, written in letters of blood and fire, in

the record of his own country's most signal achievement."

But the most interesting feature of Virgil's immortal epic is its constant reflection of Rome as it then was. Merivale says: "A grand religious idea breathes throughout the *Æneid*: Yes there are gods, it proclaims and the glories of Rome demonstrate it." It is the Roman people that is ever kept before our view. The constantly recurring idea expressed in

"Longa tibi exsilia, et vastum maris æquor arandum,
Et terram Hesperiam venies ubi Lydius arva
Inter opima virum leni fluit agmine Thybris.
Illic res lætæ regnumque et regia conjunx
Parta tibi: "*"

and again in

Conjugio, Anchise Veneris dignate superbo,
Cura deum, bis Pergameis erepte ruinis,
Ecce tibi Ausoniæ tellus, hanc arripe velis.†
Et tamen hanc pelago præterlabare necesse est;
Ausonial pars illa procul, quam pandit Apollo."

* A long exile awaits thee, and the vast deep must be passed over, And thou shalt come to the Hesperian land where the Lydian Tiber flows among the rich fields of men with gentle course. There joyful things and a kingdom and a royal wife have been obtained for thee.

† O Anchises, deemed worthy a proud wedlock with Venus, twice snatched from the ruins of Troy, cherish thy gods. So for thee is the land of Ausonia, seize upon this with your sails. And yet it is necessary to reach this by the sea; that part of Ausonia which Apollo opens for you is far distant.

might have for its object the flattery of the adored Augustus, but its interest is far otherwise for us. It casts its shadow down through the long and tortuous course of the ages and it is full of gloom. Who could foretell that the mighty Empire was even then tottering to its fall? Succeeding generations may well linger over the pages that reveal such mystic secrets. The greatest of Latin poets has held his beloved country up to view in a veil too transparent to hide the ravages that self-indulgence and insatiable pride had made in their willing victim.

Historians say that Sallust has covered the Roman aristocracy "with eternal infamy in a series of pungent satires under the garb of History." He flatly refuses to minister to the national vanity and openly reminds his countrymen that "in eloquence the Greeks, in the glory of war the Gauls, preceded the Romans."* Indeed, intent upon the duty of chastisement, he does not hesitate to say: *Postquam divitiæ honori esse cœpere et eas gloria, imperium, potentia sequebatur, hebescere virtus, paupertas probo haberi, innocentia pro malevolentia duci cœpit. Igitur ex divitiis juventum luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere: rapere, consumere; sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere, pudorem, judici-*

* "Facundia Græcos, gloria belli Gallos ante Romanos fuisse."

tiam, divina atque humana promiscua, nihil pensi neque moderati haberi.*

Yes, the Latin language will have an imperishable charm for men as long as it is an index and key to events which have so mightily influenced the destinies of our race. That its literary value consists in its inflexibility and transparency is still more evident upon a comparison of similar productions in other languages. Voltaire tried to maintain that "*L' Art Poétique*" of Boileau was superior to the "*Ars Poetica*" of Horace, and failed to convince even his contemporaries. The disparity cannot be only such as must ever occur between the model and the imitation. The language itself is far from possessing what the Frenchman calls "*la libre allure, la netteté, la profondeur de son modèle,*" while a more satisfactory cause is surely found in the fact that the writers whom Boileau's muse unveiled have no comparative claim upon our interest, for as Horace himself says :

* After riches began to be honored and glory, sovereignty, power followed, virtue began to languish, indigence to be regarded as good, innocence to be considered malevolence. Therefore in consequence of wealth, luxury and avarice with pride assailed the youth; they plundered, they consumed; they esteemed their own possessions of little value, they sought debts, they had no regard at all for modesty, chastity, things divine and human without distinction and they had no self-restraint.

"Tu rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus." *

The genius of a language forms such an important factor in the development of national life that it is impossible to acquire a knowledge of History without an acquaintance with the idioms in which its parts are written.

The same psychological law which discovers that remarks made in jest, often surprising no one so much as their own author, are the legitimate outgrowth of individual character, determines also the larger causes and effects in Literature. The origin and growth of the French language from beginning to end is a pure Historical sequence, and the reflection of History in Literature can be traced with very much more pleasure in French than in Latin authors, because the materials for study are so much more abundant and the History itself is so much more important in that it is connected with our own civilization and ideas of individual welfare. We pass from the Latin to the French language as one turns from the testator to his heir; by no arbitrary selection, but because of that natural affinity which exists only in ties of ancestry and consanguinity. With the Invasion of the Barbarians the Roman Empire saw government, justice,

* Thou dost more rightly dramatize the Trojan song,
Than if thou shouldst first bring forward things unknown
and unsung.

aristocracy, and letters disappear. Then public functionaries wrote a jargon, neither vulgar nor classical Latin, but a mixture of the two, as utterly useless for literary purposes as it was inadequate for those of ordinary intercourse. Yet, as there was no uniform German, and as there were traditions of classical Latin, the quick witted Franks saw that if order was ever to be brought out of this chaos it must be by the formation of a language which was at the same time literary and popular; and, hastening with avidity to the study of this Latin that was within their reach, they became the legislators of Europe. It is a law of History that every language, as every people, one in its origin, is not long in doubling itself into a noble and a popular class. From Brachet we find that the popular Latin spoken in Gaul, brought in by soldiers and dependents, was as little like the Latin of Virgil as the French taught by French soldiers to the Arabians was like the language of Bossuet. The Latin language had already undergone this doubling process. The introduction of Greek Art in Rome by the Scipios, the conquest of Greece and its reduction to the condition of a Roman province had introduced Greek words among the Roman aristocracy and the written language, *i.e.* the noble, had become very unlike the spoken language. Now the French took this spoken language and it doubled itself by becoming a literary and a popular language. But the two could not long

hold out with equal persistency. History accounts for the destruction of the literary Latin by calling our attention to the institution of the Curiales in Gaul, and in this triumph of the masses through the very fiscal measures taken by Rome to crush them we seem to be prepared for the part to be played hereafter by the *Droit écrit* and the *Tiers État*.

So it is altogether incorrect to say that French is corrupted from the classical Latin by a mixture of popular words. It is the popular Latin itself.

It is interesting to note the complete dependence of Literature upon History just at this point. As early as 879 the French provinces south of the Loire were formed into a kingdom under Bozon I. as king of Arles or Provence. In 1092 the line became extinct with Gilibert, who left two daughters. One of these daughters, Douce, married Raymond Bérenger, Count of Barcelona. Now it was just at this time that Abderahme had founded the dynasty of the Omiades, so that by the union of Provence and Barcelona Southern France came in contact with the most massive learning, the most brilliant originality and the most enthusiastic devotion to Literature then in the world. It was at this time also that the conquest of New Castile occurred, and the Provençals not only assisted in the war, but carried home new ideas of chivalry and the romance of the Cid, who was the hero of the war. We shall never know to what heights Provençal Poetry might have soared. For the most

bitter, cruel and perfidious persecution came to blight this fair land of song just as it began to bloom, and when peace was restored and an intellectual revival attempted, it was found that the spirit of poetry had taken its flight from the blood-stained land.

By a curious and most unaccountable coincidence one of the most sensuous forms of Literature ever known owed its destruction to the means employed to destroy one of the "straitest" of religious sects ever known, for it was the Crusade against the Albigenses that put an end to Provençal Poetry. What a train of thought this connection entails!

Going back to the Ninth Century we hear of a sect of Christians called Paulicians, who spread from Armenia into the provinces of the Greek empire. During the persecutions of Theodora and Basil of Macedonia, they fled to Bulgaria and among the Mussulmans, through the former entering Germany and preparing the way for the Hussites; through the latter entering Spain and Southern France. Multiplying rapidly in the diocese of Alby, they came to be called Albigenses. In open conflict with the Pope (who happened at this time to be Innocent III., one of the strongest characters in all History) as to Papal Infallibility, Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead, according to the ideas of the age nothing remained for them but utter annihilation. And as we trace this simulta-

neous extinction of a flourishing Literature and an independent religious movement we cannot but wonder whether it is not possible to find an explanation of this connection in the freedom of the Provençal's canons of taste and the fearlessness of the Albigensian's avowal of belief. At all events we see both spirits resuscitated long after they are supposed to be dead and forgotten. The Albigensians are scarcely less the heralds of the Reformation than the Provençals are the forerunners of modern Literature.

At the close of the Crusade Charles of Anjou claimed the sovereignty of Provence, but as he made Naples the seat of his court the traditions of the only Literature then formed were carried to Italy, and the next event which arrests attention is the formation of the Italian language in the creation of Dante's mighty and immortal "Divine Comedy."

All this while the popular Latin was meeting with a very different fate in northern France. Though long delayed, it was, however, here that the new mode of expression was to find its real resting-place and clothe the genius of the nation in forms of imperishable beauty. An entirely different element had been infused into the life of the Walloons. While Southern France was joining hands with Spain, the Northmen—the most successful invaders in History—were establishing themselves on the banks of the Seine. Intrepid, frank, and aspiring, the identification of the two peoples became com-

plete, and it is to this union that we trace the invention of a style of writing as remarkable for its originality as for its unbroken popularity, for all romantic Literature has enriched itself from the Romances of Chivalry.

In the Eleventh Century the usurpation of Hugh Capet fixed the capital of the nation at Paris, and as the Capetian dynasty waxed stronger and stronger, so the dialect of the Isle of France gained in power and popularity. Each age saw a new province added to this central province, and France rapidly grew into the compact monarchy it was evidently destined to be by its physical configuration and amalgamated races.

But it is worth while to observe that the French language has always preserved that exquisite equilibrium between neology and tradition which is the secret of a true and living language. We have seen that the Provençals carried their models to Italy, and we must not pass over the fact that the Italians brought their language to France. The Seventy Years' residence of the Popes at Avignon exercised a perceptible influence over the language, literature, and thought of France, and when we remember the iron firmness of that remarkable man, Pierre de Luna, Pope Benedict XIII., we may no longer marvel that a large portion of the French people could never resolve to break away from the spell of Romanism, for the influence of one strong will at a time of crisis is irresistible.

From the expeditions of Charles VIII. into Italy, the wars of his successors and the ascendancy of Catherine de Medici, the French became still more Italianized, and it was not until Henry IV. established the independence of the kingdom that Malherbe established that of the language.

To perceive the still more interesting connection between the History and the character of the Literature we have only to glance at their synchronism as illustrated in the Literature itself.

The early Literature of France begins with the first Crusade and ends with the reign of Louis IX. The Crusades awakened the spirit of adventure and fostered a love for heroic deeds and tender emotions—hence the *Chansons de Gestes* and the *Poems d'Amour*, for “Chivalry arose when love was added to piety and courage.” In this period we find the Legend of the Holy Graal, of which Moland says: “There can be found nowhere, in the history of any people, an example as considerable and as striking of the action of manners on literature and the reaction of literature on manners.” Its origin is lost in Asiatic mysticism, but we find a point of departure in the Anglo-Saxon schools of the Seventh or Eighth Century, and since then it has been undergoing the moral transformations of succeeding generations, until in our own day Tennyson has embodied its most sensuous features in his “*Idyls of the King*,” M. Edgar Quinet has used it to develop his religious

and political reveries, and M. de la Villemarque has made it the basis of brilliant Historical studies.

The Middle Age Literature begins with Philip Augustus and ends with the Renaissance. It is the age of communal wars, anarchy, the Hundred Years' War, distress and ignorance : hence the pleadings of the young Norman poet, Alain Chartrier, in his "Quadriloge Invectif," and the eloquence of Christine de Pisan, whom Charles V. had befriended, and whose beneficence she returned by urging upon the unworthy Isabella of Bavaria the crying needs of the poor, despoiled and maltreated by the quarrels of those who were in power.

The devout and meditative mind of the Middle Age left its impress upon no form of Art more than that of Literature. All through the Dark Ages the traditions and even the forms and themes of the classics were kept intact, and this was with the avowed intention of making them subservient to the Christian Epic, which was the ideal held before every poet. The chief narratives of the Old and New Testaments were written out in the verse of Virgil and Homer. Then Roswitha attempted the "Nativity of the Virgin," and finally Gerson embodied the spirit of this grandly diversified Age in his "Josephina"—which is valued now as furnishing the clew to the authorship of the "Imitation of Christ." France was not to give the world the author of the true Christian Epic, but we cannot overestimate the debt we owe those who kept alive this

sacred spark of enthusiasm, for all know that in Milton's great poem this enthusiasm issued in the "noblest work which the human imagination has ever attempted."

The Legend was only another expression of that *naïve* but unswerving faith in the wealth of ideas furnished Art by Revealed Religion. And from the Legend to the Drama the transition is simple and direct. The Mysteries and Moralities were the efforts of the clergy to instruct the people in Historical truth, for as scenic representation makes a more powerful appeal to the uncultivated intellect than abstract discussion, the acting out of the Scripture narratives was not only an ingenious device, but an almost indispensable means of education.

But by far the boldest and most original effort of the French genius was its adoption of the vernacular in pulpit oratory. The Sermons of this age by Michael Menot, Olivier Maillard, and Maurice de Sully, the poor peasant boy who rose to be one of the greatest orators of any age and the originator of the magnificent Cathedral of Notre Dame, are splendid epitomes of History, and no one who would know the genius of our own day can afford to slight these great works which give the first intimation of it.

History, itself, in this age is less valuable than any other form of Literature. Ville Hardouin had celebrated the reign of Philip Augustus in his "History of the Conquest of Constantinople," Louis IX. had

had his Joinville, Froissart had chatted as garrulously on paper as he would have done had there been any one to listen to him talk, and Louis XI. had his Philippe de Comines and still the art of writing History was undeveloped. Montluc, Brantôme and De Thou now begin to substitute the narrative for mere chronological record, but each of these is so bigoted in some one direction that nothing but a partial, narrow view of the age can be obtained from them.

It is refreshing then, in turning to the great period of the Renaissance to find every form of Literature reflecting the thoughts and feelings peculiar to the age. The Sixteenth Century, embracing the Protestant Revolution, the benefits of the printing-press, the unearthing of ancient Literature, the promotion of educational interests and the rehabilitation of the language, constitutes the line of demarcation in passing from the old to the new order of things. The implacable and gloomy Calvin, by his thorough knowledge of Latin and ability to express his ideas with energy and precision, not only fixed the form of the language and gave a determined character to French prose, but in his famous Christian Institutes he incarnates the very essence of Sixteenth Century Protestantism ; and, like Pascal after him, he more than exhausts the Philosophy of his age. France paid her tribute to the ancient learning through Vatable, the Hebraist ; Danès, the great Greek scholar ; Viète, the scientist and Guillaume Budée, the philologist of the century. Rabelais'

book represents the new ideas as to education, and Ronsard, Régnier and Malherbe write only in the interests of culture.

It is from the curious work entitled the "*Satyre Ménippée*," however, that we gain the liveliest conception of the times. This is a political satire describing the meeting of the States General of 1593. Written in convivial meetings by Pierre Le Roy, Nicolas Rapin, Jean Passerat, Chrétien Florent and Pierre Pithou, and named from Varro's Menippean Satires, it consists of various speeches which are representative of the political, ecclesiastical and socialistic theories then contending for the supremacy. And as an Historical event this celebrated Satire killed the League, paved the way for the ascendancy of the Politique Party and assured the triumph of Henry IV.

Boileau was born in the room in which the "*Satyre Ménippée*" was written. The idea of the power of the pen was his birth-right. And indeed History shows us that the time had come for Literature to exercise its full powers. The Age of Louis XIV. opened in reaping the benefits sown by Richelieu in the strengthening of the central power and in turning the attention of the people from themselves to their monarchy. Louis XIV. could encourage Literature as no other monarch had been able to do; hence it took a bolder flight and reveled in its own vigor. "The Seventeenth Century abounds in strong characters, strongly developed. All have a masculine sim-

plicity of nature which is the distinctive mark of their age, an age especially favorable to the production of typical characters, typical king, bishops, ministers, dramatists, monks, and courtiers."

The Eighteenth Century was the awakening from an uneasy dream, the realization that the idolized king had lulled his votaries into a sleep that was to make them forget their own dignity, their real honor, their true interests; hence the writings of Montesquieu, the Abbé Saint Pierre, Quesnay, Voltaire and his disciples, Diderot, Beaumarchais, Rousseau, etc. The way for the Revolution was prepared by Literature; and throughout the entire course of that fearful struggle every question which could possibly come within the scope of literary discussion was debated with remorseless fidelity. This Literature is not to be viewed solely as the ephemeral work of publicists and pamphleteers. In days to come no names will be more famous; no writings so scanned as those which set in motion the forces with which we are still grappling in fear and trembling. Whether it be Mirabeau, the genius of political eloquence, the first and greatest orator of the Revolution; or Lally Tollendal, deploring the disgrace of Necker in "penetrating accents," or the Abbé Maury, resolute and unflinching in advocating the prerogatives of the clergy; or Sièyes, daring to publish a pamphlet entitled, "What is the Third Estate?" or Camille Desmoulins, author of "*La France Libre*,"

“Les Révolutions de la France et Brabant,” and “Le Vieux Cordelier”—the reader is fascinated by the brilliant picture brought before the mind. The world cannot afford to forget the names of André Chénier, the young and gifted poet who perished on the scaffold for his fearless honesty and fidelity to individual convictions; of Fabre d’Eglantine, Collin d’Harville, Bailly, Verginaux and Mme. Roland. Of this last named Géroze says: “All likes and dislikes become passions in that fervent soul, and all passions are stamped with an indelible purity.” The sentiments of honor and duty ever control her, and her death is heroic and grand, for “Life filled with high duty is happy, but death received in the discharge of that duty is thrice glorious.” Lavoisier, Volney, Garat and La Harpe proclaim the end of the Terror and direct men’s minds in other channels: and Mounier, Mallet-du-Pan and Joseph de Maistre begin to philosophize upon the data furnished by the awful conflict. Never does Napoleon himself appear in a more favorable light than when at St. Helena he aspires to the dignity of writing History. In describing those memorable last days, M. Duruy says (to quote one of the most eloquent passages I have ever seen): *Le ministère anglais sembla prendre à tâche de tuer lentement, à force d’outrages, l’immortel captive. Napoleon endura ces tortures avec calme et dignité. Il ne songea qu’à la postérité et il occupa les mornes*

loisirs de sa prison à dicter l'histoire de ses campagnes."*

It would be rash to speak too confidently of the writers who shall be typical and representative of the Nineteenth Century. But the names of Carrel, de Vigny, de Tocqueville, Guizot and Thiers pledge the world that France will ever lead the nations in the triumphal march of human advancement.

Such, of course, is the barest outline of the study of History in Literature, and it may not be inapposite to ask, What are the practical results of such a study?

First of all, I would answer myself, were the labor involved in it the only profit to be reaped this in itself would be an immeasurable compensation. Happiness is incompatible with the torpor of the faculties. All work is ennobling, but in the work of the intellect this process is as much more direct as the powers of the mind are infinitely more noble, and its enjoyments incomparably more exquisite than those which the capacities of the body can under any conditions permit. It is in transforming the curse of labor into a blessing—a miracle which Divine Power is perpetually performing—that men

* The English government seemed to set itself to work to kill the immortal captive inch by inch, by dint of outrages. Napoleon endured these tortures with calm and dignity. He thought only of posterity, and he occupied the mournful leisure of his prison life in dictating the history of his campaigns.

discover the negative character of evil, that without our acquiescence nothing is evil in itself, that there is nothing which cannot be made subservient to higher ends, nothing which cannot be made a stepping stone towards attaining "the measure of the stature of a perfect man." Again, it is by means of labor that man finds his nearest approximation to creative power. And it is in intellectual labor that consciousness, or the power to connect the acts of the mind with the mind itself, is developed. And it is in developed consciousness that men refuse to hold cheap the meaning of their own lives, for, as George Eliot says, "the fuller nature desires to be an agent, to create and not merely to look on; strong love hungers to bless and not merely to behold blessing. And while there is warmth enough in the sun to feed an energetic life, there will still be men to feel, 'I am lord of this moment's change and will charge it with my soul.'"

But it is not only as a means that such a study is available. "Classical studies are beyond comparison," says Cousin, "the most essential of all, conducting, as they do, to the knowledge of our humanity which they consider under all its mighty aspects and relations; here in the language of the literature of nations who have left behind them a memorable trace of their passage upon earth; there in the pregnant vicissitudes of History which continually renovate and improve society: and finally in Philosophy which reveals to us the simple elements and

the more uniform organization of that wondrous being, which history, literature, and languages successively clothe in forms the most diversified and yet always relative to some more or less important part of its internal constitution. Classical studies maintain the sacred traditions of the intellectual and moral life of our humanity. To enfeeble them would, in my eyes, be an act of barbarity, an attempt against true civilization, and in a certain sort, the crime of leze-humanity."

The consolations of Literature are inexhaustible. The world's misinterpretation of our best actions, the power of circumstances to thwart our cherished schemes, the irony we see in our own destiny could not be borne with equanimity were it not for the more than refuge to be found in the pleasures of the intellect. Nor is intellectual labor barren of relief for those deeper and more mysterious sufferings of the soul. That men do not yet discern the true significance of the intellect is indisputable. But if, as the revered Wayland taught, "knowledge of every kind has in its very nature a tendency to devotion," it is manifest that in refusing to cultivate the intellect we throw away a priceless means toward accomplishing the end of our creation.

That intellectual labor has been abused affords no ground for argument. There is nothing in the compass of man's capacity that he will not abuse. Look at its influence in individual lives. Where books and ideas are not discussed, personal char-

acter in all its length and breadth becomes the subject of conversation. Irrespective of the moral deterioration that is here inevitable, this has a most unhappy effect on the nervous system : it is irritating, it destroys serenity of mind, it takes a large amount of happiness out of life. And, conversely, what if the intellect should be chief among the probationary elements of our present existence? If the victories over the animal propensities of the body are great and affect the development of what we call character, the conflict between the moral nature and the subtleties of human reason must be as intensified in meaning, as it is in suffering. If of those to whom much is given much is to be required, does it not immediately follow that the feeblest consciousness of intellect assumes the character of moral obligation? and as its abuse awaits a fearful punishment, so will not its true and lawful exercise bring with it a pure and bountiful reward?

But it is especially in such a study as the one we have sketched that the larger intellectual influences that affect our status as human beings are found. To aver, as I have done, that literary master-pieces attain their celebrity through the political history involved in both the language and the subject seems to annihilate personal responsibility and ignore individuality. But, in truth, no study can more forcibly demonstrate human accountability. If there is History in Literature, it may lessen the burden that is generally thrown on the individual

author, but it is to assign the portion due to the individual reader. That time, place and universal culture enter into the composition of every great work, no one familiar with English Literature can fail to notice. Froude, in his fascinating History, speaking of Shakespeare says: "Such greatness is never more than the highest degree of an excellence which prevails widely round it and forms the environment in which it grows. No single mind in single contact with the facts of nature could have created a Lear: such a vast conception is the growth of ages, the creation of a nation's spirit: and the poet filled with the power of that spirit has but given it form and nothing more than form. Nor would the form itself have been attainable by an isolated talent. No genius can dispense with experience: the aberrations of power, unguided or ill guided are ever in proportion to its intensity, and life is not long enough to recover from inevitable mistakes. No great general ever arose out of a nation of cowards, no great statesman or philosopher out of a nation of materialists, no great dramatist except when the drama was the passion of the people." Cannot any child see that unless those who read are educated the learned few can play as many jokes on them as they choose, and, as the children say, never be found out? The history of English speaking people is full of generations which have been either the dupes of erratic genius, or the obstacles to true individual and national glory. And there never

was a time when this danger was more imminent than it is to-day. For the tendency of our civilization to equalize all classes of society takes power more and more out of the hands of the individual, and while his importance diminishes, that of the masses constantly increases. Hence to wield any kind of power, the individual must put forth an energy that is almost desperate ; his expressed opinions must be ten-fold as pronounced as his inward convictions. While he thus arrests the attention of the people, they cannot be expected to pause and see through the exaggeration, and the flaw that is ingrained in this advocacy disgusts the practical few, imposes on the unlearned many, and tends to produce morbid melancholy in the two or three who understand and sympathize with the author.

There is no surer sign of the times than the current Literature of any given period. When the enthusiastic crowd carried Voltaire in its arms through the streets of Paris and suffocated him with roses, the French Revolution was virtually accomplished. Literature says, " See how wicked a man Voltaire was ! " but History says, " Look at the condition of society that could welcome such writings as those of Voltaire ! " I ask which of the two is the juster judgment ? The whole testimony of History is for virtue and against vice. Whatever Literature may boast of her own realm, History constantly declares that the standard of morals is the standard of taste. And while it is true that the

great revolving wheel of time must crush and overwhelm all that thwarts the purposes of its revolutions, yet this same record of its mighty cycles is impartial enough to show that often in individual cases the judgment of posterity is far harsher than is strictly just, and that where we stigmatize, we might often weep.

It is with a perfect realization of the expanded scope and magnificent import of History that Buckle in his incomparable "*History of Civilization*" has said: "To solve the great problem of affairs; to detect those hidden circumstances which determine the march and destiny of nations, and to find in the events of the past a key to the proceedings of the future is nothing less than to unite into a single science all the laws of the moral and physical world." The sublimity of such a glorious conception is full of awe and solemnity. What self-denials and sufferings are too great if we can but emerge from the basilar instincts that claim us to materialism! Who that is capable of a noble thought can hesitate to rejoice that his fellow-man has given it an utterance to which his faltering tongue and trembling hand were too weak even to aspire? It is a subject of daily, of hourly, rejoicing that such men have lived—to unravel the web of events and bring forth from the chaos of unutterable longing and vain strivings, shrouded in a more than midnight darkness, the exalted idea of Progress, to be the guiding star of our race, as it is already the

hope of noble souls in the long and laborious pilgrimage of humanity toward the unknown end which Providence has marked out for it. Then

“Heureux qui jusqu’ au temps du terme de sa vie,
Des beaux-arts amoureux, peut cultiver leurs fruits !
Il brave l’injustice, il calme ses ennuis ;
Il pardonne aux humains, il rit de leur délire,
Et de sa main mourant il touche encore sa lyre.”*

* Happy is he who, as his life draws to its close,
A lover of the fine arts, can cultivate their fruits !
He braves injustice, he soothes his weariness,
He pardons human beings, he laughs at their delirium,
And with his dying hand he touches once more his lyre.





SKEPTICISM OF THE HEART.

As the heir of all the ages, we, naturally, look upon our age as one blessed above all others. And if a second thought suggests the disadvantages of an over-refined civilization, we seldom dwell upon it long enough to ask what those disadvantages really are. That an artificial life, bringing in its train artificial feelings, opinions, sentiments, and beliefs, is one of these evils, we rather recoil from either stating or admitting. Yet it is hard to deny that the legislation which turns night into day and day into night, which decrees that the taste must be cultivated in the simple matter of food and drink, and the body tortured in order to be properly attired, is characteristic of a social organization which has traveled very far on its way from a "state of nature."

When we think for a moment of that pressing weight of authoritative mandate which is incidental to, and inseparable from, the moral atmosphere of such a civilization as ours, we are compelled to acknowledge that one of the far-reaching effects of its despotism must be to deprive man of that spontaneity of thought, that inward, self-originating force,

which is of the very essence of natural, free, untrammelled being.

But when we remember that the second generation which appeared upon earth found a set of opinions, beliefs, etc., already formed for it, we find in it the prototype situation of all subsequent generations; and as the child finds that he cannot advance one step in the acquisition of knowledge until he accepts as true much that he cannot possibly prove to be true, it would seem that a peculiar and, to some extent, mysterious responsibility is bound up with the acceptance or rejection of accredited beliefs.

One may be artificial in holding beliefs which are in themselves true and genuine; and, conversely, true (*i.e.*, honest at the time) in holding opinions which are false and, if false, pernicious.

Still further, no sincerity in believing can be a guarantee for the efficacy of the belief. Our ecclesiastical fathers had the firmness and the boldness to declare that "They are to be accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of nature." There is such a thing as objective Truth, and that Law or that Sect may be as far from this Truth as the east is from the west.

We know the common method men take to flatter themselves that they are in the right, that they hold the true opinion, that they cannot possibly be mistaken: they believe in the settlement of all questions

by an appeal to numbers ; whatever the majority decides upon is right. And though History shows us over and over again that the minority was in the right, and that generations suffered because the many would not accept the truth which the few discerned, the world still prostrates itself before collective opinion. Let the individual or the minority undertake a course of action at variance with this collective judgment, and the world will resort to the most vicious means that can be conceived of for discovering truth. Its language is "Succeed, and we will believe you were in the right ; fail, and we will decide that you were in the wrong." And let it be remembered that when the world speaks of success, it always means worldly, visible, tangible success. Now can anything more absurd than this appeal to the result be conceived of, when the very search after truth is based upon the assumption that we live in a world full of error ? He is already vanquished and a craven who cannot hold fast to the assurance that truth will be truth whether it is believed by one or a million, and whether it ruins or crowns its advocate.

A common fallacy charges the intellect with the entire responsibility in ascertaining this Truth. And upon no other grounds than a pretended admiration for intellect the world is constantly challenged to admire those thinkers who have set aside accredited beliefs ; not because they have discovered the Truth, but simply because they have voiced the

vague notions of the multitude : and this by a flattering appeal to its intellectual power.

It has even gone so far as to pity and compassionate those thinkers who (trusting solely to intellectual discernment) have proved themselves utterly unable to perceive the Truth. Only thus can men relieve themselves of a heavy burden.

The classification of our mental powers is at fault. We find in one of the best compendiums of Mental Philosophy ever issued the gravest errors on this subject,—statements to the effect that if the intellect be keen, the heart will be warm and the will strong ; whereas nothing is more evident than the almost universal maladjustment of these powers, nothing more apparent than the rarity of a symmetrical nature.

There is no law by which the intellect gives its limits either to the heart or the will. But one of these is generally the predominating power of the mind, and the intellect may be emotionalized and the heart intellectualized, or both may be swallowed up in a will-power, which, as in the case of Napoleon, has no limits.

When confronted by such a life as that of Marcus Aurelius one feels baffled in finding that so lofty a moralist, so keen a thinker could have made one of the greatest blunders that has ever been made in all History ; for, in striving to suppress the Christian religion, it is evident that he had not the faintest suspicion that it was to become not only the re-

ligion of the Empire, but of the world. If the age in which he lived could account for this position, how was it that there were those in "Cæsar's household" many years before who could discover the truth in Christianity—especially when at that particular time they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by it? Why are some men permitted to see more of the Truth than others? What are the principles of mental cultivation which tend to clear perception of the Truth?

The perception of Truth is not granted at all on the ground of mental illumination, but in virtue of *character*. In ignorance of this, the many are perfectly content to see truth in a single line, to have it touch only one small part of their nature; and those who teach the young dread the subject of Free Inquiry, because they do not know how to explain away the fact that some infidels have discovered some truth. It is truth, indeed, in less than a line, in a mere point, as it were, for man is less correctly represented as pure intellect than as nothing but moral emotion or volitional agency. But character is the fusion of all the mental powers; it betrays the whole being at once and without controversy.

Metaphysicians of the greatest celebrity and eminence have puzzled over the causes of belief. What are the principles of association or what the intuitive cognitions by which we are induced to believe this instead of that, to assent to that which

seems true to-day, but is proved false by to-morrow? Every effort that can possibly be made has been made to ward off the idea that we are actuated in our beliefs by anything but pure mental perception. But all logicians know that the intellect can follow certain steps of an argument with perfect satisfaction while the whole being revolts from the conclusions reached, though it is utterly unable to invalidate the reasoning or repudiate the error. Is it not evident, then, that the truth does not address itself to the intellect alone?

Setting aside such beliefs as result from axiomatic propositions, the evidence of the senses and facts uncontested by personal interests, I think we shall find, upon closer examination, that our beliefs are largely influenced by our desires. There are those who say (and especially with reference to the Articles of the Christian Faith), I am not so happily constituted that I can believe what I want to believe. Now that is exactly what they are doing, and not they only, but all of us are so constituted that we do, as a matter of fact, believe only what we desire to believe. Our morbidness must be confirmed indeed when we habitually and spontaneously look on the dark side of doubtful matters and *prefer* to believe that true which runs counter to our wishes. Here we have wish opposed to wish. Whichever one triumphs, it will be because of its own strength, not that of some foreign power. In every department of life the beliefs of all non-experimentalists

are thus coerced ; and the smallest amount of reflection will render it evident that such a condition of things is inevitable. Certain statements of Chemists, Astronomers, Physical Geographers, etc. are accepted by the unlearned only because they involve no personal considerations, *i.e.*, make no moral demands. Let similar scientific statements assume a personal character, as in Political Economy, Physiology, and Psychology, and the masses of men flatly refuse to give them a hearing. Wonderful is the pliancy of that mind which can believe in the existence of the tombs of Hector and Achilles (while the world doubts—and cares still less—whether Hector and Achilles ever *lived*) and yet find it difficult to believe in the Resurrection, the best authenticated fact in History !

One of the hasllowest arguments in the world,—that because a man is born a Christian, a Momhammedan, or a Pagan, therefore, one religion is as good as another—is always turning up ; iterated and reiterated we meet it in many different works ; it has a perennial charm for some minds. But no one can seriously believe that it addresses itself to the intellect. See how men have twisted and perverted the meaning of this fact. Because a man teaches his son a false religion, they say we are under a system of fatalism, no son is responsible tor his religion : when the true conclusion is not that no son is responsible for his religion, but that every parent is. It is wholly to waive the consciousness

of this responsibility that men give heed to nonsense which would otherwise disgust them.

A spurious morality calls attention to the obligations of children to parents ; never to the obligations of parents to children. In order to get rid of the responsibility involved in the parental relation—a divinely-invested power, in the outrageous abuse of which men openly glory, the ground is taken that the Bible is the authority for this, while Natural Religion and the testimony of every fact around us prove that penalties and rewards of the most stringent character are bound up in the parental relation, and nothing but propriety and sentiment in the filial relation, which from the derelictions of parents themselves is so often felt to be a merely nominal tie.

In nothing is the Inspiration of the Bible more evident than in the fact that all its precepts are diametrically opposed to our natural feelings and perceptions, to what we should have supposed to be the way, the truth, and the life. Then, if the Bible seems to place greater stress upon the obligations of children than upon those of parents, it is because we would not naturally discover these obligations. They are not inherent in this system of things. It is the fulfilling of these obligations that constitutes religion, while the discharge of parental obligations is mere morality. I do not mean to make any distinction between that which is right in itself, and that which is right because of the Divine

fiat. I know of nothing which is right except because of the Divine Will. But there are many moral laws and obligations which are self-evident and automatically punitive, and the obligations of children are not of this nature.

That some men are Christians just as others are Mohammedans and Buddhists, is undoubtedly true. But how can there be any fatalism about this, when there was a time in which neither the Divine Reformer and His Apostles, nor Mohammed, nor Buddha lived on earth? Each system was an innovating system, and some sons must have thought for themselves in order to establish the system. Moreover, there is not a country upon the face of the earth in which error does not stand by the side of truth, even that degree of truth which is as yet there discerned; and there never has been a state of affairs in which the most earnest, dogmatic, and authoritative teaching of some fathers has not been coolly, deliberately, and defiantly set aside by some sons.

But the most striking and peculiar oversight in this discussion is that concerning the effect of Truth itself upon the character. Men say if all religions present their prophets, their sacred books, their martyrs, and their miracles, how shall we know which is the true religion? Each one will assume that religion to be true in which he has been trained. But this is not the fact. The error is based upon the assumption that all the religions of

the heathen world have been equally false. But what a vast difference between the Phœnicians and the Persians! What a world of thought between Druidism and Brahmanism! Buddhism *was* an improvement upon Brahmanism. The Monotheism of Socrates was, as a matter of fact, as great an improvement upon the Polytheism of the Greeks as Christianity was upon Judaism. We must get into the realm of the actual. You must deny that men can perceive degrees of comparison in anything if you take the ground that they cannot perceive them in religion. Until it can be proved that Christianity does not present the Truth as it is for all men and all time, we have the best of reasons for believing in it.

The world is challenged upon exactly the same grounds to admire the character of Christ as it is to admire that of Socrates.. Unless there is *this* perception of the Truth among men, intercommunication is impossible. Anything like universal mental intercommunication is out of the question. It is no more possible that men should share ideas to any great extent than that they should share patriotism, government, family life, and individuality. But it is possible that they should share love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, against which there is no law, in any corner of the universe. It is to elude the recognition of this that so much emphasis is laid upon belief in the historical facts connected with Christ and His Re-

ligion. Ingenuity, subtlety, guess work of the most laborious description are employed to distract the attention from the real thing at issue. It is not evidence, external or internal, that we need, to prove the truth of Christianity. The question is "Do you want that Religion to be true?" If you do, you are a believer; if you do not, you are an atheist, though you be invested with every honor which the Church can confer.

Disingenuousness is the great enemy of the Truth, and the only formidable foe against which we have to guard ourselves. It is so covert, so subtle, so truly satanic, that many fall victims to it all unconsciously. Among literary works, Buckle's "History of Civilization in England" is the outcome of a disingenuousness which is almost unparalleled in all Literature. He may not have been conscious of it, and without proof we need not believe that he set this before him as the object of his work. But seldom has anything more pronounced in this direction been produced. To form one's hypothesis *first* and then collect the facts to support it may be almost called a crime in moral discussion, and if pursued in the affairs of the world would be totally subversive of mutual faith and trust. Deductive reasoning, the peculiar prerogative of Mathematics and the Mathematical Sciences, can be employed with profit only upon questions which involve no moral interests. Imagine the treachery of that man, who, in meeting you, assumes a knowledge of

your character and then works down to its details upon the basis of this assumption! Such a process would be just as unfair were the assumption that of a perfect character as if it were that of a most imperfect character, for it is as painful as it is injurious to be stereotyped better than one is.

There is no easier, simpler, more childish method of Historical investigation than this. By adopting it anyone might prove anything: for certainly there are facts enough to be ferreted out: and why should not a certain array of them prove whatever the author bids them prove? The philosophical mind knows by intuition that there are some points upon which one might keep on collecting facts for ever and yet not be able to arrive at the Truth. Everyone knows that when the interest is once aroused in a certain subject, that subject, though never before noticed, is now encountered everywhere. The eye sees what the heart wishes it to see. The man who has a hobby finds that hobby in subjects which to the unprejudiced mind do not bear upon it in the remotest degree. This principle of self-impartation is the essential element in criticism, for:

“Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.”

If you are sensitive upon any one point, you find people laying your heart bare on all sides. Buckle could not pretend to disguise his personal interest

in his investigations into the causes of civilization. That interest gives his book its chief charm. But that is just where he loses his case. He proves that he *is* no dispassionate seeker after abstract Truth, whatever he may have thought about himself. One feels that just as fascinating a book as his might be written upon all that long list of facts which he did *not* notice or collect.

A disingenuous statement is a very different thing from a disingenuous method. The impression received from the latter may be agreeable or distasteful according to the previous tenor of thought and training: but the impression from the former is direct and much more harmful. If a false impression is to be conveyed, the end will be attained with greater ease by a bold falsehood than by a mode of argument. A distinguished critic commenting upon the "Thesmophoriazusæ" of Aristophanes says: "The finest point about the Comedy is its humorous insight into the workings of women's minds, its clear sense of what a topsy-turvy world we should have to live in if women were the law-givers and governors." It is by such insinuations that the world is hoodwinked upon questions of vital importance. When we stop to think, we know, of course, that the world is what it is because of the share which women have had in its political government. But so deliberately is this ignored upon general principles, that a remark like the above not only passes muster, but provokes the mirth and

admiration of the world. The tone of insincerity in this one statement excited my suspicions and, in the course of the most desultory reading in the world, I resolved to observe the number and character of the women who have been enrolled upon the page of History as sovereigns or legal rulers. Let me run over my list and then offer some suggestions.

Boadicea, the warrior Queen of the Iceni.

Semiramis.

The Queen of Sheba.

Cartismandua, Sovereign of the Brigantes.

Thuoris, Regent and virtual Queen of Egypt, who brought up Moses.

Martia.

Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetæ.

Deborah, "a Ruler in Israel."

Sparetta, Queen of the Sacæ.

Artemisia, II.

Ada, reigned four years at Halicarnassus.

Artemisia, wife of Darius and contemporary with Xerxes.

Parysatis, wife of Darius Nothus.

Athaliah.

Camilla, Queen of the Volscians.

Placidia, sister of Honorius (404), ruled Western Empire during the minority of Valentinian.

Pheretina, grandmother of Baltus IV., Regent in Cyrene.

Cleopatra (181-173, B.C.), Regent for her son, Ptolemy VI., "whose administration," says Rawlinson, "was vigorous and successful."

Another Cleopatra ruled ten years for her son Lathyrus.

Berenice (B.C. 81).

Alexandra, widow of Alexander Jannæus (B.C. 77.) of Judæa, reigned nine years. Milman says, "She was a woman

of masculine understanding and energy of character," making her prosperous reign a memorable one in those stormy times.

Dido, Queen of Carthage.

Chloris, Queen of Pylos.

Clytemnestra, Regent of Mykenæ.

Penelope, Regent of Ithaca.

Hatasu, Queen of Egypt, B.C. 1500.

Nitocris, Queen of Egypt.

Nitocris, Queen of Assyria.

Zenobia.

Theophano, Regent for her son Otto III., 983.

Adelheid, Regent for her grandson, Otto III., 991.

Margaret, Queen of Norway (1397), under whom occurred the famous Union of Calmar.

Isabella of Castile, for extravagant praises see Prescott.

Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, B.C., 30.

Eirene, Empress of Constantinople (797), caused the division of Eastern and Western Empires.

Hedwig, Queen of Poland.

Christina, Queen of Sweden.

Joanna I., Queen of Naples, 1343-1382.

Joanna II., Queen of Naples, 1419-1435.

"The great Queen Regent" (Milman), Maria de Molina of Spain, 1324.

Maria, Queen of Portugal and Brazil.

Isabella II., Queen of Spain.

Elizabeth of England.

Mary of England.

Mary II., governed England entirely during continental wars of William—see Macaulay.

Queen Anne.

Queen Victoria.

Mary of Scots.

Lady Jane Grey.

Lady Arabella Stuart.

Mathilda, Queen of England, 1141.

Eleanor of Aquitaine, Regent for her son Richard.

Constance of Brittany.

Isabella, wife of Edward II., of England.

Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI., ruled England during the War of the Roses, 1460.

Mary of Guise, Regent of Scotland.

Margaret Tudor, wife of James IV., Regent of Scotland.

Jeanne d' Albret. D'Aubigné says of her : " She had nothing of the woman in her except her sex : her whole soul was given up to manly things, her powerful mind occupied in great affairs, her heart invincible in great adversities. She was the noblest woman of her time, a pillar of light, shining in the gloom and corruption of the age."

Isabella, wife of Philip Augustus, Regent of France.

Blanche of Castile, " who ruled," says J. S. Mill, " in a manner hardly equalled by any prince among her contemporaries."

Anne of Beaujeu, Regent for eight years, and according to G. W. Kitchin next to the best Ruler France ever had.

Louise of Savoy.

Catherine de Medici.

Marie de Medici.

Anne of Austria.

Marie Thérèse, 1672.

Henrietta, sister-in-law of Louis XIV., and sister of Charles II., made the Treaty of Alliance in 1670 between France and England against Holland. See Guizot.

Marie Louise, 1813 and 1814

Empress Eugénie, 1859 and 1870.

Catherine I., Empress of Russia, according to Dr. Lord one of the most remarkable individuals who ever lived.

Anne, Empress of Russia.

Elizabeth, Empress of Russia.

Catherine II., of Russia.

Sophia, Regent of Russia, " ruled well for seven years and

with advantage to Russia." See Schuyler's "Peter the Great."

Pulcheria, Regent of Eastern Empire, 414.

Eudocia Augusta, of Eastern Empire in Eleventh Century.

Agnes, Regent for Henry IV., of Germany.

Gertrude, widow of Henry the Proud, and Richenza, "women of a manly spirit, defended Saxony against Albert the Bear." See C. T. Lewis.

The Sainted Elizabeth of Hungary.

Maria Theresa, Queen of Hungary and Empress of Germany.

Joan of Flanders ruled Brittany for nineteen years.

Joan of Pentièvre contested the claims of the above for nine years and convoked the States General.

Blanche of Montferrat ruled Savoy, 1494.

Jacqueline, Supreme Ruler of the Netherlands in her own right.

Mary of Burgundy, Ruler of the Netherlands.

Margaret of Austria, Regent of the Netherlands. Kitchen says, "She had all the strength which ought to have belonged to her brother, Philip the Handsome. To successful statescraft she added good government and an enlightened love for the Arts and Sciences."

Mary, Queen of Hungary and Governor of the Netherlands.

Margaret of Parma, Governor of the Netherlands during the stormiest period of their history.

Queen Caroline of Naples, who took the government out of the hands of her husband (1790). See Ruffini, Mme. Vigée Lebrun and C. D. Yonge.

The Princess of Parma, second wife of Philip V., of Spain, "under whose government Spain once more became a power," See Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis XIV."

The beloved Bertha, Queen of the Burgundians, eleven centuries ago. Her age was called a golden one. The proverbs of the Germans and Italians introduce her name as significant of good old times like those of Queen Bess. See E. P. Thwing.

Catherine Larchevêque de Parthenay, Governor of La Rochelle during the famous siege. For unlimited praises see Voltaire and Guizot.

Louise de Gusman of Portugal, 1656.

Daughter of the Duke de Nemours who deposed Alphonse of Portugal in the Seventeenth Century.

Catherine Sforza, Governor of Forli, 1499.

Duchess of Urbino, Princess of Romagna, 1502.

As Hindoo principalities are very frequently governed by women during the minority of the heir, and as their condition is never so good under any other circumstances, even though the names of these Rulers cannot be ascertained, we may put down as the minimum of the number worth naming at least ten.

Charlotte, Queen of Cyprus and Jerusalem.

Queen Pomare.

Ranovalona I., Queen of Madagascar.

Rasoherina.

Ranovalona, II.

Queen Kapiolani.

Now, if in this hap-hazard fashion one can bring together such an array of names, out of which no unrespectable proportion of wise and able rulers may be drawn, what could not be done by a thoroughly versed Historian if interested in the matter? Surely enough to establish the fact that women have made as good rulers as men. (!)

Our critic's statement, then, is doubly misleading; first, as to the impression that too few women have

ruled to permit one to base anything but conjecture upon the character of their government, and again, as to the impression that those who have ruled have failed.

This kind of dissimulation is the result of emotion, sentiment,—a feeling which sweeps all before it and cares nothing for the flimsy opposition of facts. Heart-skepticism is, in fact, the only thing of the kind which produces an effect upon the world. No one cares anything about a purely intellectual skepticism. Archbishop Whately wrote an Essay which upon the world's accepted principles of skepticism triumphantly proved that Napoleon Bonaparte never existed, and people cared so little for it, that though one of the most ingenious feats ever performed, it has passed not only out of record, but out of memory. John Stuart Mill wrote an Essay which proved that the franchise should be given to women, and *in order to refute it*, men said that he was an infidel, and that, *therefore*, everything he said was vitiated. That is, they virtually said: "We are perfectly willing to agree to the idea that Napoleon never existed, because we care little for Napoleon and much for the principles of the infidels. But we cannot believe Mill, because we care much for our own rights and little for those of women. When the infidels prove what we want to have proved, we will believe in them to all lengths. When they prove what we do not want to have proved, we will make the very thing in which we trust

in the one case the stumbling-block in the other." That the extraordinary solicitude about Mill's atheism was entirely due to the hatred of woman suffrage is evident when we examine the world's attitude toward other eminent infidels. Gibbon dealt the most cruel blows at the very heart of Christianity; yet clergymen edit his works and try to account for his assertions. Shelley avowed the most direct enmity to the character, teaching and religion of Jesus Christ, and tried to propagate doctrines which sap the foundations of domestic happiness. The world quickly divined that his polemics were utterly powerless and said: "He is the greatest poet England ever had." Paley, the author of a system of Moral Philosophy,—himself a minister of the Gospel,—put forth moral principles which Mill scorned to countenance; and for generations his works were used as text-books at Cambridge and Oxford and in the Christian Colleges of this country. It is not necessary to multiply instances. This subject of the rights of women is one which cannot be discussed dispassionately. It is a question of class interests which conflict more desperately than any that can be named. Everyone knows that there is no real meaning in discussions as to the permissibility, advisability, desirability, etc. of women's having political rights. All this dodging, this equivocation, this sophistry is employed to cover up the sense of shame. The astonishment that is expressed over the fact that men,

generally, do not want to give women these rights is feigned. For in our secret souls we all know that there is nothing rarer than generosity. Do you find that men who are ungenerous toward women are, as a rule, generous toward men? Never; except in cases where the hatred of equal rights is the result of special inculcation, when it becomes a part of a man's religion and must be dealt with like every other form of fanaticism. This question of generosity strikes at the very heart of character. It is fundamental. Women hate the recognition of this fact and will blink it to any extent that can be named, even to that of professing themselves downright unbelievers as to the possibilities for their sex; and this is one of the reasons that they have permitted themselves to be bribed, intimidated and silenced in expressing any opinion on the subject. But men are not troubled by any too much feeling for men; hence they go far ahead of women in advocating the cause of women.

One of the most amusing forms which this want of candor ever assumes is the fear expressed by both men and women that the possession of political rights will unsex women, for when one asks these objectors why women should not be unsexed, they fall back upon the assertion that the Creator instituted sex and meant it to continue; as if, in that case, anything they should do or leave undone could effect it!

Many who talk a great deal on this subject are

so densely ignorant of Historical facts that one ought not to wonder at their gropings. They are not aware that the appearance of women in politics could not possibly bring about a greater change than the appearance of women in Literature and the Drama. There was neither any study nor any appearance of women in the Greek Drama, and the fashion of making them the embodiment of one idea only continued until the time of Shakespeare, while the theatre still continued to be attended only by women of notoriously bad reputation, who, even then, were masked. The reason that so many of Shakespeare's women are disguised as pages is that young men always acted these parts, and devout admirers of the great dramatist believe that in the delineation of these complex characters he foreshadowed the advent of women in public life.

There are thousands of excellent reasons for the exclusion of women from public life, and reasons, too, which are even on the side of generosity: against which one needs to be specially cautioned. Men are hurt, they say, in seeing a woman fail, and when everything is against her a woman must fail. This sensitiveness looks so much like sympathy that one is charged with being an out and out skeptic in rejecting it. In reality, it is one of the most shameful counterfeits ever palmed off on society. True sympathy is ready to say: "And if you fail, you fail." Genuine affection says: "Do not carry out *my* wishes: they are subordinated to yours." This

sacrifice of "self-born aims and wishes" is, indeed, the supreme test of affection; but a dictatorial, despotic affection is no affection at all, but selfishness of the deepest dye.

Granting that in a country like ours there are, apparently, insuperable obstacles to the extension of the franchise to women; allowing that no substantial change or gain would ensue to the country and the condition of politics; acquiescing in the assurance men give that the duty of voting is a burden from which they shrink, and the holding of an office under government a responsibility under which they groan; would it not be more courageous, more manly and more truthful to acknowledge that egregious blunders have been committed in the constitution of our political affairs, entailing obstructions to the universal welfare in which the disabilities of women constitute but a single element? that if no change for the better is to be brought about by effort it must be because that effort is neither honest nor direct? and that for the unselfish relinquishment of privileges long enjoyed and long uncontested most men have not yet been educated or prepared? being in the condition in which Scott describes Napoleon, like a child with its toys, that of which there is any attempt to deprive them immediately becoming the most valuable of their possessions.

A question of far greater importance than any we have yet considered is that involved in the attitude of the Church toward this as well as other

reformatory movements, for many persons are absolutely sincere in believing that the Church must be the guide here as in all questions of vital moment : and it is a fact which none can gainsay that the Church scarcely countenances, much less initiates, these movements.

Now to the spirit of the Christian religion we may trace all trustworthy ideas of democratic government, principles and modes of thought. But the Church is a visible body and as such pursues a definitive policy, which is that of pure and unflinching conservatism. So that it often happens that the external, visible organization called the Church works against the very spirit it has diffused in temporal affairs. It cannot work against this to any injurious extent, because as an institution which has its place in the world, and as a factor in political life, it was meant to be palliative rather than remedial, protective rather than aggressive, and if it is this on the side of the evil features of reformatory movements it must be equally so on the side of the beneficent features. The Christian religion certainly did not inculcate admiration for the character of Nero : yet the precept "Honor the king" was enjoined while Nero was reigning. Political governors and rulers are most certainly commanded to adopt the principles and practice the precepts of Christianity, but neither in the Bible nor in the workings of Divine Providence are we led to believe that any of the temporal institutions of earth have

the same work to perform which the Church has. In the infinitely higher and more important labor which the Church has to accomplish little scope is found for aggressive action in temporal affairs, which in being temporal are not therefore of no importance, for in the application of the spirit of the Gospel to the secular interests of life lies the whole responsibility of those who are engaged in these interests, and while the world exists this class must exist. The Church is not necessarily the clergy, nor are the clergy invariably the church : although this in the first instance and as the representative fact must be acquiesced in by those who have agreed with me thus far. But the devout layman may accomplish a work for the Church which a clergyman could not accomplish, and a clergyman may respond to a more imperative demand than that of his profession in befriending and promoting some immediate cry for help. Disloyalty to the Church and its teachings and traditions cannot possibly be charged upon the sincere lover of progress. For the more truly sincere he is, the more will he rejoice that there is a counteracting, checking, restraining force somewhere. Not to do so is to be either half-hearted or a fanatic. This constitutes the difference between Mill and Shelley, Coleridge and Bentham, Sterling and Carlyle. The bigotry of narrow-mindedness is one thing to be guarded against : the bigotry of liberalism is not less dangerous. .

Christianity, we are told, is the most intolerant religion in the world. Exactly so. How can the Truth be tolerant of error? Are we to understand, then, that the nearer we approach absolute Truth the more intolerant we shall become? Have the Romanists and the Puritans been the best illustrations of the Gospel-spirit?

Opening the New Testament, I find that it coincides exactly with the Old Testament in this, that it is intolerant toward certain dispositions *of the heart*: and, strange to say, toward nothing else.

The Psychology of the Bible stands every test. It tells us that "with the heart man believes unto righteousness"; that "out of the heart" (not the understanding, as the world supposes) "are the issues of life"; that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so *is* he"; that out of the heart all crimes proceed, the list of which is headed by evil *thoughts*; that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"; and that the "fool says in *his heart* 'There is no God'." It contrasts a "double heart" with "singleness of heart"; a "heart which is slow to believe" with "an understanding heart"; a stony heart with a heart of flesh: a "deceived and deceitful heart" with "uprightness and integrity of heart"; a "heart which is not right in the sight of God" with a "sound heart." It shows us how man reasons in his heart, purposes in his heart, lays things up *in* his heart, lays things *to* his heart. It teaches that man can "make his heart as adamant,"

and that he can "rend his heart." It goes still farther. It speaks of "the imagination of the thoughts of the heart"; —that it may be "only evil continually"; and, again, that the holy fear of God may be *kept* there forever. It speaks of man's imagining evil in his heart against his neighbor; of his walking, that is, living, in the imagination of his heart; it tells us of purity of heart, of "the hidden man" of the heart, of the consecration of the heart, of the fleshly tables of the heart, of doing the will of God from the heart.

All this goes to show that man is a spiritual being and that the Bible is a spiritual Book. Here we get down to the "very central self, the inner citadel of the soul." We see that there can be no period in the world's history, no people, no race, no position in life, no occupation, no opinion which cannot be judged by this standard. Your period in the world's history may have been dark, stormy, unsettled, that does not absolve you, O Pharaoh! nor exalt you, O Jochebed! Belshazzar and Daniel lived in the same palace. Pascal and Escobar studied the same Philosophy. Why speak of lesser antitheses? The climax of all that is awful is found in the position of Pilate, when in the presence of Christ, Himself, he demanded: "What is Truth"?

How immeasurable then, is the toleration of Christianity! How marvelously unlike all human conceptions is its boundless charity! It asks but one thing, that a man shall be true of heart, and it

asks this of everyone upon the same terms and for the same reasons.

By the light of the New Testament we see that Gautama was very much more of a Christian than Torquemada ; that the Roman Centurion was a believer, and Caiaphas the High Priest was not ; that Hypatia was a thousand times nearer the truth than Cyril, George Fox a better guide than Archbishop Laud.

Now in what does this sincerity of heart differ from that sincere belief in a certain Law or Sect and the light of Nature, so unequivocally condemned by the framers of the Prayer-Book ? Is it not evident that one may be sincere in heart and yet not be in possession of objective Truth ? Yes. But by a perfectly sincere desire to know at any cost every fragment of Truth that can come within his reach, the individual is pledged to go on until he is prepared to know the whole Truth in a higher state of being ; while the ardor for a certain Law or Sect is a belief in the efficacy of objective truth as it stands at any given time and place, which puts an end to progress and emphasizes error.

This method of determining the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the sincere person from the hypocrite has a twofold effect upon the judgment. It suspends it ; showing it that there is a province into which it cannot penetrate, for in the last instance man never can be the judge of his fellow-man. And it excites it and sets it to work,

pointing out the true province into which it can penetrate, for in judging others we judge ourselves.

This is the point at which we discover the moral character of belief. You do not reveal your character in saying that you do not believe in the Trojan War as an Historical event or in the theory that the planets are inhabited; but the moment you touch upon any phase of character you betray your *self*, your individual nature, your inmost being. When we do not wish to get down to the essence of things, to judge every question in the spirit rather than the letter, it is because we have some personal aim in view with which this method interferes. I will not go all lengths with La Rochefoucauld. I am not willing to believe that "the intellect is always the dupe of the heart." But I do believe that the intellect is at the mercy of the heart, and that the desire to conceal a secret love of evil is at the bottom of many arguments addressed ostensibly to the intellect alone. What is integrity of heart but the belief in Goodness, Absolute Goodness, somewhere, somehow,—all the Goodness of which you can conceive, and all the Goodness which has ever presented itself to your view? How can those who are in search of Goodness be opposed to each other? Rather, will not those who know most of Goodness *in esse* be the first to detect it *in posse*, through all forms?

We have considered that form of unbelief which pretends to originate in the intellect but does, really,

originate in the heart and betray moral turpitude. But there is a genuine skepticism of the heart and a skepticism to be vindicated. It does not pretend to originate in the intellect; it does not attempt to justify itself; it makes no boast of being admirable. There is a certain Hindoo sect which classifies mankind as the bad-bad, the bad, the bad-good, the good-bad, the good, the good-good; thus amusingly, but forcibly, calling attention to the subtle discriminations devolving on the judgment. And when we reflect that everything which is valuable has its counterfeit and that we are exposed to the loss of everything that is desirable unless we distinguish between the real thing and the counterfeit, we cannot wonder that there should be skepticism in the world.

History shows the direct conflict, the open antagonism, between form and spirit,—for the express purpose of vindicating the triumph of the spirit and testing the depth of spiritual conviction. It shows us how form is utterly false to spirit, because spirit is not dependent upon form. The whole of life is arranged upon this principle. The external, visible bonds which bind human beings to each other are types, representative of spiritual relationships. Take family life, the domestic circle, which is cried up to the very skies as the summum bonum of earthly existence. Those who have looked beneath the surface of things know that there is no severer test of character than that imposed by the domestic life.

There, where forms in general are dispensed with : where each knows the other as well as it is possible for one human being to know another ; where worldly motives for self-restraint and courtesy are removed and criticisms with which no one would dare to attack a perfect stranger can be made with impunity, because in virtue of the outward relationship alone they must be forgiven and forgotten unreservedly, there indeed a means of discipline is offered which no other sphere of life can ever afford. A more extraordinary spectacle than perfect unanimity and harmony in family life cannot be found on earth. We are told that under a spiritual dispensation a man's foes shall be they of his own household, and that the Christian religion will be the occasion for setting a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a father against his son and a daughter against her mother ; because the more outwardly probable it is that we shall be understood in our spiritual aspirations, the less inwardly possible it is. The real relationship of soul with soul, nature with nature, cannot be brought about upon any formal principle. The father is not congenial to his son in virtue of being his father. The motherly heart is not confined to the woman who is a mother. Why is it written, " Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that travailest not ; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband," except to show us the vast, the eternal superiority of the invisible over the

visible? The characteristics of sex, like those of age and station, are generalizations of spiritual qualities which have an existence of their own and are wholly independent of the particular sex, age or station in which they may originate. You may and you ought to carry the joyousness and enthusiasm of childhood through a long life. But you are not a good reasoner, not possessed of daring physical courage, not fired with a desire for the public welfare because you are a man. Every woman is not womanly; that grace which soothes, sweetens and adorns life is so precious because it is so rare. But in the most admirable and the most charming people, personality always eclipses the distinctions of sex, age, and station.

There are those who have a very hard time trying to discover just exactly what worldliness is. They have been taught to think that it consists in a certain manner of living, a style of dress, the love of the Drama and a fondness for social intercourse, and that by not countenancing any of these they may attain unworldliness. Robertson is the only writer I have ever known who has been able to tear away these veils. "High Art," he tells us, "is essentially unworldliness, and the highest artists have been unworldly in aim and unworldly in life." Worldliness is entanglement in the temporal and the visible. It matters not whether you are rich or poor; whether you dress magnificently or soberly; whether you have rank and title or not; whether you are in the

Church or out of it, as far as the *love* of the temporal and the visible is concerned. And that cannot be driven from the heart by anything but the love of the eternal and the invisible.

In the detection of worldliness the world is seldom deceived, though it may be unable to explain the nature of it. For instance, the world generally considers Theater-going as one of the cardinal sins, and wonders how those who call themselves Christians can indulge in it. And as it knows that the many who enjoy the Theater are rather benefited than harmed by it, it is necessary to pierce beneath the superficial opinion that the harm consists in the Drama, in order to understand the real opinion that is kept in the background. However narrow, uncultured and unsocial they may be who both condemn the Theater and stay away from it, the world at least perceives that they are honest and admires their sincerity. But it knows that of those who attend it the vast majority do, really, as a fact, look down from a superior height on those who interpret the Drama; ostracising actors and actresses from society and hooting at the very idea of permitting their own sons and daughters to study for the stage. Here is where the real criminality lies,—in the shameless unwillingness to share in the odium connected with the profession from which these well-bred people pretend to derive enjoyment and benefit, for it is evident that the whole character of the stage could be changed in a single generation if there were any

genuine appreciation of it. There is a bare-faced falsehood in pretending to admire the Play and refusing to honor the person who makes that Play a life-long study. And so the world rightly calls this worldliness, for it is nothing but a counterfeited dilettanteism and a vulgar pretence of appreciation. I do not like the Drama, just as I do not care for Fiction, because I passionately love Abstract Thought and the Arts that emanate from it, but I cordially hate that false sentiment which permits a certain class of Theater-goers to drag the Drama down to their own level.

The protest of real skepticism of the heart is to be vindicated because it is not made against the world, but against itself. Through a conception of, and a desire for, firmer belief than that around them men declare themselves doubters. They endeavor in this way to provoke the Truth to proclaim itself, and to doubt their sincerity is a reflection upon our own. No one can truly doubt who does not truly believe, for the consciousness of doubt is belief. Just as no one can doubt who does not suffer: for suspicion cannot originate in contentment. Whole books, and series and classes of books, are written not by any means to convince the reader; the writer writes them to convince himself. When the stock sentiments, beliefs, etc., of the age are forced upon a nature that is born free, there is a revolt, and the revolt indicates that the heart is sound. The perfectly sincere nature can-

not have its beliefs made for it. The intense nature that perceives the shocking disparity between the ideal and the real has its mission marked out for it as by a Voice from Heaven. Feeling that is deeper than the definitions of feeling has no other refuge than to take upon itself the appearance of coldness. Some unknown poet divines the secret of this paradox, in describing the soul,

“ That what it wishes, wishes ardently,
That would believe it hated, had it power
To love with moderation.”

The gifted mind can convince the unthinking world that there is a deeper stratum of belief than that which it has yet sounded only by daring to question the reality of any belief. This is the magnificent explanation which Victor Hugo has found of Machiavelli's wonderful work. The whole intellectual world has puzzled and studied and debated over this strange exception to all the great efforts of genius : for if “ The Prince ” was written in the interests of wickedness and vice, it is the only thing of the kind on record. At last the Master came, who could rightly read the riddle. He says : “ To heap the measure, to overflow the cup, to exaggerate the horror of the prince's deed, to make the burden more crushing in order to make the revolt more certain, to cause idolatry to grow into execration, to push the masses to extremities—such is Machiavelli's policy. His Yes signifies No.”

It is incredible that one attacked with genuine skepticism of the heart should not deplore it. For though the world may and does receive an indirect benefit from this source, all feel that it can be permanently and positively aided only by those who are "full of faith." To such the importance of forms cannot be overestimated; for, as Miss Sewell says: "Form without spirit is for the time dead; yet while it remains with us, it is the ever-present witness to the existence of the spirit which once inhabited and may still return to it. But spirit without form may die, and none be aware of its departure." It will not do to assure each individual that he is to trust to his own convictions, for it is evident that the many have no strong convictions. The weak-willed (and they are legion) have a decided antipathy for them. Beliefs must be moulded into creeds, just as thought must pass into language if it is to live. In every age the people are "led like sheep by the hand of a Moses or an Aaron."

How, then, can any one deny that a certain mental equipment is the only thing which authorizes one to become an independent seeker after Truth? The coolness, the absolute effrontery with which those who have never thought at all sit in judgment upon those who have consecrated their lives to thought is despicable. While upon general principles all have truth to discover, it does not follow, even under the law of sincerity of heart, that any will be able to perceive specific Truth beyond the

range of the intellectual vision. Are there to be no pioneers of thought because the great mass of mankind is content to plod on in the old ruts? Ah! men say, but what of the old saying, *Vox populi, vox Dei*? How are you going to get around that? Well, in the face of that, Arthur Collier, a Metaphysician of some note, took for the watchword of his Philosophy; "*Vulgi assensus et approbatio circa materiam difficilem est certum argumentum falsitatis istius opinionis cui assentitur.*" The voice of the people is the voice of God only in generalizations of a certain order. The people may decide upon truth when it is presented to them, but who is to present it to them? Sallust makes Cæsar say: "*Omnes homines qui de rebus dubiis consultant ab odio, amicitia, ira et misericordia vacuos esse decet,*" and this dictum at once and forever disqualifies the people for this post of honor.

Natural indolence of body and mind, love of sensual ease and comfort, time-serving, toadyism, the fear of persecution and contempt, all render an honest, independent search after Truth one of the most improbable things in the world. And these evils also account for the suspicious temper of those who insist upon imputing base motives to those who do undertake to be Truth-seekers. "What!" some one exclaims, "have I not a right to say that I disagree with such and such a person, am I not entitled to my opinion?" No, I say most emphatically, you are not entitled to suspicions: no one

can be entitled to put the worst possible interpretation upon the opinions of others.

Galileo does not stand alone in being tortured for maintaining that "the world moves." But the world has so often discovered that real progress is not necessarily in the line of material civilization, that it can be forgiven now for a measure of its distrust. It sees that refined civilization lessens the number of independent thinkers on the side of positive, constructive theories, and tends to increase those of negative and destructive bias, and hence it falls back upon the natural instincts, and believes that in dependence upon them it may recover the spontaneity, the liberty, the intensity for which it longs. It encourages the novelist to treat of the criminal classes of society and the criminal passions in which they indulge because it believes that they are natural, spontaneous, unaffected, while everything in the better classes is artificial. If this is the distinction to be made between the natural and the artificial feelings and opinions, it must overthrow all theories of education; for why discipline any part of our nature if not that which stands most in need of discipline? There is no real room for speculation here, for we have only to appeal to facts to see that "every respectable attribute of humanity is the result of a victory over instinct."

It is not by familiarity with a lower stratum of society, nor by falling back upon the sentiments of a past age that we can know what it is to be gen-

uine and natural. Is it not evident that either of these methods is the very quintessence of the artificial?

It is not enough to be in possession of independent opinions. One must have the mental strength to distinguish between his own real feelings and the feelings the world expects him to have and to express. In this way the meaning of even deeply rooted prejudices may be ascertained and the prejudices themselves utilized to advantage.

Each generation is confronted by a set of opinions, sentiments and beliefs already formed, but each generation has it in its power to modify, reconstruct, revivify every truth presented to it, and this is the real task set before it. There will always be a large class to take everything just as it comes, well satisfied with its own condition and without the slightest desire to reform any abuse under which others suffer. And there will always be a class to destroy, to deny, to negative the errors in the opinions and beliefs already formed. What the world needs and clamors for is a class which is willing to be misunderstood, to be suspected in its purest motives, questioned as to its loftiest aims, opposed, hindered, laughed at, slandered, for only then can it be sure that it is being steered by those who are true to convictions which are trustworthy.

Let those who will, take the second rank in combating the errors which cling to truths too rigorously defined; their own age will have its laurels

ready for them. The highest rank can only be attained by the few who know how to take the truth in the beliefs already formed and convert it into the substance of the truth that is to be; and they cannot be crowned in their own day and generation.

The collective opinion of the unthinking masses may be (and often is) on the side of unbelief. The consensus of thought among the greatest minds of every age must ever be on the side of belief. Men can deny the truth that is put before them, but they can only truly affirm the truth that they put before others. There is conscious weakness in all denial—whether it be sincere or insincere—for it is concerned about that which must cease to be. And there is conscious strength in all belief, whether it be perfect or imperfect, for it is concerned about that which is to last.

Each succeeding age seems to render individual belief more impotent only because it makes a greater demand upon that belief, and the many are “weighed in the balances and found wanting.” Refined civilization lessens the number of independent thinkers only because it asks more than men are prepared to give. The many already see something noble in the brave protest of the individual against the error universally accepted. They have not yet perceived the far higher nobility of those who are determined to believe in the truth ascertained, “though it slay” them. These are

they who "stand in the breaches," to "make a hedge for Israel in the day of battle." And to such some kindred spirit, who has gained the victory, cries :

"Dare to be strong, the world is very weak,
And longs for burning words which strong souls speak,
Thirsts for the cup which ye have strength to grasp,
Toils on the road which ye are swift to run,
Does naught itself, but worships what is done,
Spare it one hand : thine other angels clasp."





THE DECLINE OF ART.

THE Decline of Art! How familiar the words sound to the Art-student or the European tourist! How glibly the phrase falls from the lip or pen of the Art-critic! How unconsciously the current coin has been passed from hand to hand!—while all the time its image and superscription are so defaced (if not obliterated) as to be positively undecipherable.

I will venture to trace the experience of the youthful Art-student, as he starts out, fresh from the schools, to the examination of a fine collection of paintings—either of the originals in the Galleries of Europe, or of the best oil copies and engravings at home. He chances upon a picture which attracts him from its very oddity; the forms—whether of angels or men—are meagre, stiff, angular, expressionless: the colors are pale, faded or subdued: as for the action portrayed, it is impossible to tell what any of the persons represented are about to do, but it seems highly improbable that they ever have done anything or ever will seriously attempt anything. Rushing in a bewildered frame of mind to his beloved Guide-book or Critic to

know what "the authorities" have said, he finds, to his unbounded surprise, that the said picture belongs to "the Purest Age of Art"—that it is a masterpiece, a work of genius : that it is, in fact, to an admiration of this that all his Art-education has been directed. Alas ! how desperate are his efforts as he struggles to accommodate himself to the fact. But what is this radiant work that now meets his eye ? Oh ! what god-like, angelic, divine forms, what superabundant energy, what life, what magnetism are in this piece ! Colors softer than the rainbow, joy, love, even ecstasy seem to radiate from every point. "Hush ! hush !" says his guide-book, "Aren't you ashamed to admire that ? Don't set yourself down as an ignoramus, that belongs to the Decline of Art. Be quiet : you will know better by-and-by."

As the Galleries of all the principal European cities—London, Paris, Florence, Rome, Milan, Naples, Munich, Dresden, Antwerp and the Hague—just the cities most likely to be visited by the tourist and the collections from which copies and engravings are most frequently made—contain a far greater number of works belonging to the decline of Art than to its purest age, the Art-student has a much better opportunity to become familiar with the former than the latter, which he must seek in such out-of-the-way places as Bologna, Ravenna, Perugia, Pisa, Palermo Assisi, Bruges, etc., and in

books of engravings placed by their erudition and costliness beyond his reach.

Despite the evidence of his senses, the faithful disciple, following the lead of a revered teacher, fully acquiesces in the established fact that Orcagna, Ghirlandajo, Angelico, Perugino, Signorelli, Albrecht Durer, Memling and Van Eyck are the painters, and Art died with them: that Domenichino, the Caracci, Guercino, Guido Reni, Rubens, the Carravaggi and Carlo Dolce are feeble, false, base imitators of the Masters, poor apologies as Artists, and their time one to be wept over by all who are in the real secret of Art.

Now the critics—those of high and those of disputed authority alike—(I believe I have read many, if not all, of the best known) either take too little upon themselves or expect too much of us, for they nowhere explain just exactly what we are to understand by these ominous words: the Decline of Art. Mrs. Jameson, in her enthusiasm for mediævalism, does not hesitate to use the term of some of Raphael's works: Lady Eastlake pours out a perfect vial of wrath and denunciation whenever Michael Angelo is so much as alluded to in this connection: Taine is withering when he is forced to speak of Guido. Ruskin is positively savage when he touches upon the Laocöon. And yet, turn the critics around: Mrs. Jameson can become eloquent in behalf of Guido; Ruskin devoutly worships Michael Angelo: Lessing based his interpre-

tation of all Art upon admiration of the Laocöon (which, by the way, he knew only through engravings) and thereby produced one of the most suggestive works ever written, which, according to Goethe "will ever remain the finest monument of a compact and cultivated intellect." Truly, indeed, do

"Liberal applications lie
In Art as Nature, dearest friends."

Is then the study of Art nothing more than the study of theories? Most emphatically would I protest against any such supposition.

While a world of delight is revealed in the discovery that no criticism of Art can be other than a subjective one, and hence that every fine mind making a study of the subject will throw new light upon it, still, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Art exists as an independent reality, a product of nationality, of a specific time, of a peculiar environment, in a word, of History. In order to understand anything of the significance of a rise, progress, maturity, decline and fall of Art, it is absolutely necessary that we view it as a matter of History. But the objectivity of Art is something more than this. As the subjective treatment only makes Art a branch of Psychology, so if we stopped here the objective interest would cease with the Historical; whereas nothing is more evident than the rigid distinction that is to be made between the Art which is interesting from an Historical point

of view and the Art which is interesting from an Artistic point of view.

Confining ourselves to the simplest principles of investigation, and selecting at random such diverse Art-developments as the Sculpture of Greece, the Painting of Italy, the Music of Germany and the Literature of England, we shall find that there is one thing which, as Art, they all must have in common. The matter itself through which the Beautiful is expressed in Art, must be considered from a material stand-point. Now as soon as any one form of matter becomes recognized as a proper mode for the representation of the Beautiful, be it the marble block, the plane surface, the key-board or the language of a people, the artist recognizes that this form imposes upon itself a certain inevitable development. And the artist is the only one who recognizes this. No one else can. Others may be able to speak or write or think eloquently upon the subject. They may bring all their individuality, all the charms of a captivating personality to bear upon it, but they cannot produce a work of Art unless they recognize the fact that that work must sustain a fixed relation to the germ which was contained in the first work attempted in this form.

The difficulty encountered here is, that people will imagine that the artist must be conscious of making this recognition. This does not follow at all. As fine a work of Art may be produced without such consciousness as with it. The perfect

ease with which genius always does its work is the most astonishing thing in the world to the rest of mankind. Doubtless it was meant to be.

Set aside this archetypal germ, this form-impetus, and it is difficult to see how any one phase of Art could be superior to any other. All Art would be at the mercy of the individual Artist, whereas, rather than concede this we would affirm, in view of the Art that has been produced, that all artists are at the mercy of their Art.

Never is the force of this objective dictum more evident than when the Arts seek to intrench upon each other, or in other words, miss the meaning of their own form-impetus. Instead of gaining, which is the end proposed, they lose immeasurably in power and impressiveness. In Ghiberti's celebrated bronze doors we have one of the most noted instances of this; but indeed all relief Sculpture is crude, immature painting. The representation of statuary in painting is simply unendurable, even when the figure is transformed from the marble to the flesh tint, of which I can recall no more flagrant example than Rubens' figure of the Apollo Belvedere in one of the gorgeous Marie de Medici pictures in the Louvre. The grandest compositions in music are those which have no name, no title, being known simply as "works." The more impossible it is to give expression to the effects produced by a certain musical work, the higher rank does that work take as Art. The Wagnerian attempt to

make music illustrative of life, drama, or idyl is an instance of splendid daring, but will in time serve only as an index of swift decadence from the great tone-masters. The mention of an instance coming nearer home to many may not be out of place : the pictorial illustration of an artistic work of Fiction. Who has not had his sensibilities rudely shocked by the visible representation of some scene in which his imagination was reveling ; bringing him down from the empyrean of fancy and emotion to this work-a-day world with a most inglorious thud ! When *Corinne* and *Romola* thrust themselves upon us in prosaic costumes that are out of date, the wonderful impression which can be produced by nothing but impassioned language is more than half dissipated.

Rev. Edward L. Cutts, whose researches have so greatly enriched Art-criticism, calls attention to the fact that all the great works of the world have been produced by what he calls "adherence to a traditional type." Certainly we all know that Dante took Virgil for his model, Virgil took Homer, and Homer took the traditional ballads of old Hellas. Shakespeare took the Italian romances, the tales in Holinshed and the stock pieces of the Elizabethan theatre and only clothed them in a faultless diction. Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson achieved their greatest successes in perfecting the form of ideas which had long been given to the world. It is in vain that Sismondi breaks forth into an eloquent tirade

against the servile acts of creative genius. For in the very act of deploring that it should be so, he, himself, finds an explanation of this contradiction. Contrary to the popular impression that the greatness of character is in proportion to its capacity for self-assertion, he finds that in politics, in religion, and in poetry, in proportion to the intensity and impetuosity of character, just so will the nation or the individual endeavor to subjugate itself. But this self-subjugation to the perception of the ideal is not, as he supposes, imitation: it is divination: it is genius, or the power to subordinate the trivial to the essential, to concentrate in order to intensify.

This was the great value of Lessing's work. He called attention to the fact that the genius of the artist would ever be in proportion to his ability to perceive the limitations prescribed by the form of his Art. It seemed impossible that anyone could improve upon, much less gainsay and overshadow the magnificent work which Winckelmann had accomplished for Art. But his exposition made Art wholly subjective. It was only one half of the perfect whole. The half is only true when it is represented *as* the half: but it is doubly false when it is put for the whole. I firmly believe in all the lofty idealism which Winckelmann discovered in Greek Art. I do not believe it is possible to go too far in valuing the thought, the feeling, the religious faith and belief, the study and the ambition that enter into the composition of a great work of Art.

All this exists parallel to and as a correlative of the objectivity we have spoken of.

Without this form-impetus how shall we account for a fact by which the student is always profoundly impressed—the rapidity with which pure Art springs suddenly into being? The interval between the Archaic period and the Purest Age is always so short that it is amazingly disproportionate to all the other periods. Bach touches the secret spring of the clavichord and the next thing we know all Germany, all Europe, all the world rings with harmonies it never knew before: Giotto draws his perfect circle and lo! Italy is flooded with an unearthly radiance and Raphael stands before us as the perfect painter: Chaucer and Gower dare to test the resources of their native tongue and anon Shakespeare wields a sceptre none has wrested from his grasp: while still more marvelous is the fact that for 2200 years the world has done its utmost to improve upon the sculpture that was perfected, with the most liberal estimate that can be allowed, in less than 200 years. We leap from the *Æginetan* to the *Elgin Marbles*, but we grope our way in painful uncertainty when we once leave *Scopas* and *Praxiteles*.

A knowledge of this must put a stop to such inanities as: "Each generation improves upon the past:" "We must look forward to a more perfect Art than any we have yet known." Each phase of Art has its own peculiar form and each form has its

limitations. In the germ the artist sees the projection of a plan, and this plan must work its way to perfection through all the obstructions of individuality and personality. It is adherence to the ideal, not of the artist but of the Art (which of course does not reside solely in the material element, but in the prevailing thought and feeling of the age as well), that converts an artistic attempt into a work of Art. This is the reason we call the Purest Age of Art the one which is least affected by personality. How difficult it is to connect the name of the individual artist with a great work of Art! Raphael is almost as shadowy a figure as Phidias. Who thinks of Beethoven when he hears the "Adelaide?" Who thinks of Shakespeare when he sees or reads "King Lear?" Art, then, in its maturity is not a reflection of the individual mind, but of the spirit of the age; not the offspring of a personal taste, but of a national conviction.

Sculpture, from its simplicity, is the purest of all the Arts, and in Greek Sculpture we have the standard of all pure Art. The true aim and object of Art never was to give us a faithful representation of anything that we can see or know in real life. The anthropomorphism of the Greeks was ennobled through sculpture, because it afforded the most intellectual nation in the annals of the world an opportunity to set forth in visible form its highest thoughts, grandest aspirations, and loftiest idealizations.

Taine defines the ideal in Art as the predominance of the "character," or essential quality of the object. In nature, he says, this quality is only dominant; it is the aim of Art to supplement Nature and make it predominant. Winckelmann says Impersonality is the distinguishing feature of the ideal in Art. Lessing seems to think the ideal representation is that which being richest in suggestions allows the freest play to the imagination. In whatever language we express the thought (and all language seems rather clumsy at such a time), I think we are all agreed that the ideal is the expression of something better, loftier, more perfect than anything we know or experience in real life. Pure Art deals with the abstract, rather than the concrete, the simple rather than the complex. Undoubtedly one of the conditions of perfect sculpture is the absence of any lively conception of individuality (or complexity) of character,—a condition at once giving the ancients an incontestable superiority over us.

The resources of a specific form are not exhausted, but their limit is attained with astonishing rapidity as soon as those resources begin to be examined. Not only does true Art spring suddenly into being; its own period is remarkably short-lived. Who has not observed that we have twenty times as many works belonging to the Decline as to the Maturity of Art? And not only that, but the individual artist oftens attains his maximum point early in his career, while after that he goes on for

years producing inferior works. The purely subjective explanation of this is that in his youth he seeks to attain; in middle life he thinks he has attained. But surely a more satisfactory explanation is found in the fact that in the youth of a nation or an individual one great idea is more apt to take possession of the mind than at any other time. Now the ideal representation will always be that of one great idea; the emphatic exposition of a conception, of which unity, harmony, simplicity, constitute the very essence. We all know how the concise expression of a great idea strengthens its effect. Explanation, expatiation is reiteration, tautology, and this is the death-blow to the grandeur of an idea.

It would seem, then, that the purer Art is, the more it will address itself to the thoughtful few, the less to the thoughtless many. The vulgar mind avers one person's opinion to be as good as another's on a subject which is supposed to address itself solely to the sensibilities. It is very evident by this time that I do not consider this a subject addressed only to the sensibilities. Here it seems to me lies one of the grand distinctions to be made between Mature and Declining Art; it is the former which addresses itself to the judgment, the latter to the sensibilities.

The earnest student is convinced, however long he may wander on aimlessly, feeling that he is steering without a chart, a compass or a goal, that

there must be a standard for Art outside of his own fancy, and equally and impregably protected from the prepossessions and prejudices of any other individual fancy. He cannot but see that there are certain periods in the world's history when Art is demanded. There are times when its significance will be apparent to all, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free. These are periods of great mental activity, of great political fermentation, ardent religious faith and excited feeling. Then Art takes the place occupied in less exciting times by didactic writing. Not only archaic Art, but all Art is symbolic. It has a sign language of its own. And the greatest discovery to which my own work as a student of Art has led me is that this sign-language is invariable.

Schlegel accomplished a splendid work for criticism when he pointed out the entirely different ideals of Classical and Romantic (*i.e.*, ancient and modern) Art; that the one is the poetry of joy, the other of desire; the one glorying in possession, the other shadowing forth the unattainable. But this classification is misleading when we come to consider the fundamental principles underlying Art as Art. These cannot be one thing in a certain age and another in a different age; if so, Art has more of History and Psychology than of itself in it. That it must speak in the vernacular of the age is self-evident. It takes the ideas of the age and makes use of them, and it also expresses itself by means

of different media, but its own pure ideal is always and irrevocably the same.

This unity of the ideal in Art may not consist wholly in the integrity of the traditions handed down from one generation to another. But as it is a matter of fact that only a few nations have shown themselves capable of artistic perception, it would seem unwise to ignore the possibility of such a chain of events. The apparent spontaneity of the great outbursts of Art has carried with it such an evidence of intuitive perception, that lovers of Art (to whom intuition is everything) have not been willing to turn their attention to the possibility of an unbroken Historical connection.

For myself, I cannot avoid seeing as much intuition in the acceptance of a tradition as in the discovery of a truth. At all events, it seems to me entirely too little attention is ever given to those breaks in History which occur as breathing spaces in passing from one crisis to another. They are the real epochs in History, the connecting links, the indicators, without which nothing can be clearly understood. Yet they are hurried over in order to reach periods of culmination, so that the historian may have a better chance to air his magniloquence.

Without entering into the question at length, and because I have opened this discussion with the subject of Painting, let us consider this point with reference solely to Christian Art. Here it is quite possible to prove that a form of Art does not spring,

Minerva-fashion, into being. We know that as early as the Second Century of our era there were artists who devoted themselves to the representation of the great facts and doctrines of Christianity. This was done in secret for some time, in the Catacombs. Now this Art was a mixture of Greco-Roman Art (a secular representation of which was going on in Rome simultaneously) which we all know was in the most miserable decadence, and of the new elements which had been furnished it both by the resources of the material form and the new Ideas of the New Religion. The province of Painting was suddenly discovered to be different from that of Sculpture. This explains the utter inability of the ancients to make anything out of Painting. It had never been in any other than an archaic stage before it was discovered through Christianity that by this means ideas of the ideal could be conveyed and glorified. We can see for ourselves in the paintings of Pompeii what that Art was in its voluptuous decline, and this suspicion—that the Ancients did not understand the scope of Painting—cannot but be verified by the experiment.

Sculpture represents the impersonal; painting the personal. But Art demands that Painting shall impersonalize the personal, if such a mode of speech may be permitted. For instance, the expression of the human eye is that of the most intense personality. Now in Sculpture the eye is as expressionless as possible, for the iris is without

a pupil, the incision of the iris producing a hideous material effect. But in Painting the much severer demand is made that an exact representation of the human eye shall convey the expression not of an individual person, but of humanity in its specific relations and aspects. Again, the true effect of Sculpture can only be attained by the solitary figure; the group is a contradiction in the terms of the Art, a mass, a conglomeration, destroying the symmetry, grace and sublimity of the forms. But in Painting the single work may be crowded with figures, as in Tintoretto's "Paradiso," Palma Giovanni's "Last Judgment," and Raphael's unrivaled "School of Athens," the laws of perspective, color and chiaroscuro rendering each figure independent of every other.

But to return to the Historical connection. This merely decorative, ornamental, flat, lifeless Painting of the Ancients could never have been metamorphosed (there was not enough vitality in it to sustain it in its own stage) had it not been that the seat of government was changed from Rome to old Byzantium. This old city, founded more than nine hundred years before, had never had any Art of its own. But we should not forget that it was founded by Greeks, and that it abounded in works of Art brought from time to time from the Art-centers of Greece. But while Byzantium was old, Constantinople was new, and this combination of circumstances afforded the very conditions necessary to the

development of Painting. The dabblers in Art in Rome could not pass from pagan to Christian Art without carrying their corrupted traditions with them. But while there were no dabblers in Constantinople, the sacred traditions of Greek Art had there been kept intact, and when the demand for the new Art made itself felt, new artists could transmute the meaning of those traditions in new forms with an avidity which nothing but novelty can excite. Not until we recognize the Byzantine influence in Painting do we find that elevation of mind, that religious tone of feeling, that true æsthetic instinct which led Homer to represent his heroes as possessed of *one* more than mortal attribute, and Phidias to carve the "Blue-eyed Maid" in proportions of colossal grandeur.

Any student can trace for himself the identity of this ideal in Art. He will find that of Athens in her glory and that of Mediæval Europe in her confusion one and the same. Thus it is evident that in this single instance, at least, the greatness of Christian Painting did depend upon the integrity of the traditions handed down, and Art revived in a Greek city only through the purity of Greek formulæ.

One of the most singular features of this Art, and one which many in this degenerate age find very laughable, is that it was regulated by Law. This was a characteristic of Greek Sculpture in its palmyest days, and when we know this it does not seem

strange that it should be a characteristic of Byzantine Painting as controlled by the Greek Church.

Another characteristic common to Hellenic and Byzantine culture which, in the case of Christian Painting, has been assigned a totally different origin, is the worship of Virginité. This is generally ascribed to the teachings of the Roman church. But it came to Christendom from the East and through the Greek Church. And no scholar can fail to recognize a feature made so prominent in every form of Ancient Religious Art, and especially of Greek Art. Even Euripides, tossed about as he is by every wind of doctrine, is perfectly certain of his reverence for "chaste Diana, the virgin huntress." One is utterly horrified by the wild fanaticism which has raged around this standard, to which men have been so innocently, yes creditably drawn by generous longings for the ideal. For the explanation of this excessive admiration of Virginité is nothing more than that it is possible to perceive purer simplicity, more perfect unity, loftier impersonality, greater abstraction, greater "concentration in manifestation,"—in a word, greater ideality in this form than in any other. I suppose this to be the meaning of the modern poet when, in incomparable beauty of language, he bids us

"Keep the thought of life, like Mary, virgin to a virgin's heart."

So if you cannot pierce through the spectral ri-

gidity, the hard monotony, the formalism and conventionalism of Byzantine Painting and perceive the noble dignity, the majesty, the serenity in which those artistic representations veil their loveliness in order to reveal their divinity, you must utterly fail to appreciate the significance of such phrases as the "Purest Age of Art," or the "Decline of Art."

For you cannot have considered the subject worthy of any real thought unless you have discovered that Beauty is not, as the man of mere sensibility supposes, the first requisition in the representation of the Beautiful. Most writers make this distinction by speaking of Moral Beauty and Sensuous Beauty. But it is necessary to express the distinction a thousand times more emphatically in order to convey a correct idea of it. The passivity, the immobility, the awful quietude of the Jupiter of Oticoli or the Madonna of Cimabue do not especially appeal to the moral sense, or, what is really here meant, the purely intellectual nature; we are affected by them through the senses just as in all other Art. While on the other hand, such things as the Medicean Venus, the Dying Gladiator, the Laocöon in Sculpture, and Crucifixions, Depositions, Noli-me-tangeres, *considered as events*, in Painting—none of which appeal more to the senses than the intellect—are excluded from the realm of Pure Art. Evidently all depends on the answer to the question: *How* should Art appeal to the intellect?

That none of the great Arts in the world have

ever been entirely abandoned, although there is not one in which the world has not already discerned a perfection and a subsequent decadence, is a fact worthy of exciting the noblest curiosity. It were idle to undertake to prove that mankind in general gives the preference to Declining Art: the fact is patent to everyone. But I cannot deny that it does strike me as a strange thing that this preference, so deep-seated, so all-prevailing, so ineradicable, should be passed over as a superficial thing, to receive from thinkers of all descriptions nothing but a sweeping condemnation. If it were confined to the thoughtless, the ignorant and the self-sufficient, such a course might be deemed justifiable. But this is not by any means the case. It betrays itself in those who try most carefully to conceal it. It creeps out sometimes in admiration for a single work, a preference, for which the admirer feels bound to apologize most humbly. In fact it is quite as apparent in the most intelligent connoisseurs as in the unintelligent and uninformed masses. Certainly there must be some satisfactory explanation of this mystery.

We have noticed the impulse given the Art of Painting by the traditions held sacred in Byzantium. The next fact which strikes our attention is that Rome, not Constantinople, is the Art-center of the world. The imperial city could not begin to compete with the ecclesiastical city in fostering and developing the new form of Art. For the life in

Constantinople centered about an irresponsible despotism (extending even to the Church), an old worn-out experiment, which the world was even then rather tired of making over again. But Rome, forsaken and abandoned by the great, found herself in a position to more than compensate her for the loss of a worldly court and meddling statesmen. All the life there concentrated itself upon the new Religious doctrines, and this concentration is one of the essentials of success in Art. At this point Roman artists were in a far better position to forward and perfect the plan originated and proposed in Byzantium. With consummate skill Italy seized upon the suggestions offered by the old Greek city. The Byzantine influence which is so noticeable in the solemn and majestic mosaics in the domes of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and San Marco in Venice, in the frescoes of Santa Maria Novella in Florence and the Campo Santo in Pisa, ruled with undisputed sway all along the ages, now succumbing beneath a lack of technical skill and anon triumphing over the feeblest efforts of the Artist. It is this and this only which redeems the works of Orcagna, Buffamalgo, Simone Memmi, the Gaddi, Fiesole, Luini, etc., from the charge of grotesqueness, profanity and positive ugliness. In all of this Art we have the subordination of expression to thought. But what is so magnificent in this period of development is the assurance which each work gives of a possible perfect counterpoise of thought and ex-

pression. To the thinker thought is more than expression.

Technical skill rapidly advanced among the Art-loving Italians, and the transition into the realm of Pure Art, is, as usual, so gradual that it is almost impossible to assign any particular works or time to it. Only one thing more have I to insist upon with regard to the Greek ideal,—the acknowledged fact that the Madonna di San Sisto, the greatest work of the greatest painter that ever lived, is the climax of this ideal in the Art of Painting. The gloriously beautiful, tender, dark-eyed woman

“ Whose virgin bosom was uncrosth
With the least shade of thought to sin allied,”

is on the canvas of Raphael a pure abstraction. The only respect in which this differs from the perfect ideal of Greek Sculpture is that in the latter we find an abstract of but one attribute of perfect character ; while this is an abstract of all.

It is not in human nature to rest satisfied with man's expression of the perfect. Of course the age itself does not know when it has attained its maximum point. From the existence of all the forces gathered together for the attainment of the perfect it is not possible that there should be a sudden cessation of Art : hence the long-continued, long-unrecognized decline. Moreover, the ideal in Art is rather the negative expression of perfect character than anything like a positive illustration of it.

Looking closely at the works of the great masters we shall find that they do not dare to touch upon anything so perilous as the positive expression of personality. But the world can never be subdued into saying that it does not like this expression, for, the truth is, it delights in it. It does not care for the perfect work as much as for the mind behind that work. It is not the impression to be produced upon the beholder, it is the manner in which the artist is himself affected by his subject that the world wants to find out. The thoughtful few who understand the secret of Pure Art keep telling us that Shakespeare's glory consists in that impenetrable impersonality which makes it impossible to discover through one of the numerous characters divined by his genius and drawn by his pen the one thing we want so much to know—the character of the individual Shakespeare. And there is no use talking about it, the world cannot, and does not, and will not take to its heart the genius that depicts that horrid Falstaff with the same inimitable power and skill as it does the noble Cordelia or the grave and troubled Hamlet.

Yes: it is hazardous to praise: very perilous to condemn. But this peril has a charm. For in repeated attempts, some degrading the subject beneath contempt, some elevating it above comprehension, a happy mean will inevitably be struck, and then will come forth one of those works which

baffle all criticism, but take the heart by storm and refuse to have their witchery questioned.

Michael Angelo is the great Master of Declining Art. His failures are more interesting to mankind than the successes of other artists. The intense individuality of his genius could not be fettered by the laws and principles which hedge in perfect Art. He did not care for Beauty; he did not care for form. One can scarcely believe that the marble which is seamed and saddened by the touch of his impetuous chisel was once serene and shapeless. The world feels that the great inaugurator of Declining Art erred not through weakness, but through the strength of powers which are incompatible with our earthly and material means of expression; and when it wants to characterize an enthusiasm of self-abandonment which issues in the unreserved communication of the whole being, the unveiling of the whole soul in actual labor, it can call it nothing less than Michaelangelesque.

Admirers of Fourteenth Century Art and profound critics, you will observe, do not expatiate upon the Renaissance; not recognizing any such event in the History of Art. The great classical revival which followed upon the fall of Constantinople in 1452, entailing a new development upon Painting and the fusion of ideas so utterly opposed to each other as those of Grecian hedonism and Romish asceticism, is bewailed and deplored by them as constituting the death-blow of Pure Art.

This impulse was, indeed, very unlike that which Byzantium had furnished in the 4th and 5th centuries. It was not a suggestion, not the "motiv" of a new inspiration: it was the ingrafting of the whole body of Ancient Philosophy upon Mediævalism. "The genius of the Renaissance," says a modern novelist, "abandoned itself without reserve to the pursuit of everything which mankind had ever known of the beautiful, or felt of the pathetic or the sad, or dreamed of the noble or the ideal." Not only was this genius not afraid to predicate; it knew no limits to the wild excesses of its license. Themes which the reverent mind of former ages had shrunk from dwelling upon were now reveled in for the sake of technical effect, and the hand which had traced the features of the Divine Sufferer lent itself to the portrayal of mere meretricious earthly charms.

The apotheosis of suffering, as in Monastic and Märtyrological Art is the commission of a sacrilege towards Art. Yet so intense, so morbid, so excited were the feelings of this age, that sorrow itself was avowed to be a delicious luxury, an indulgence reserved only for the favored few. But out in the world, above all other homages that to Beauty reigned supreme. Everything was sacrificed to the Beautiful, which is, again, from another point of view, on the other side—the spiritual side of Art—a sacrilege.

With the sudden accumulation of the wealth of

ideas inherent in Pagan Art, unsurpassed technical skill and the yet undeveloped resources of the Gospel Narrative, the genius of the age seemed to shake off every trammel, every check, and never before, as never again, in the history of the human mind is Immortal Truth so inextricably woven with splendid error.

That beauty of form triumphs over dignity of thought in this great Decline is not an objection to the ordinary mind. It is in vain that the student is armed beforehand with every kind of panoply with which the disciplinarian can provide him. When once in the gorgeous Palaces of Europe, should he have one atom of spontaneous admiration left him, he will turn to the magnificent works of Domenichino, Titian, Tintoretto, the Caracci, Guido, Guercino, Garofalo, Rubens, the Caravaggi, Carlo Dolce, and so on even with the lesser lights of the Decline, with a zest and an ardor which nothing else in Art will ever arouse.

It has been my privilege to examine the Paintings in two Modern Greek Churches,—the one near Wiesbaden, in the Duchy of Nassau, and one of those in Geneva. I was much interested in these Russian Paintings, for such I judged them to be, though it was impossible to ascertain whether they were originals or copies. The Byzantine treatment was easily recognized. But the curious feature of this treatment was that it dealt in expression rather than in idea. It was just as if the Madonna

of Cimabue had been painted with all the softness and sweetness of a Guido, being at the same time totally devoid of the loftiness of sentiment, the dignity and the elevation of mind that characterized the Byzantine School in Italy.

Now this has thrown much light for me on the true nature of the Italian Renaissance. The point of excellence that had been reached had taught its lessons. Pure Art had spoken of the great Truths which underlie all existence. It remained for the genius of the modern world to apply those Truths. That there is danger in this individual application of Truth no one can deny. But if there is reprobation for those who err in this difficult path, just so much the more is there praise for those who act aright. It is in Art, and only in connection with Art, *i.e.* the appeal to the perception of the Beautiful, that man, acting either through the force of native genius or as the agent of Divine Inspiration, has ever set forth ideas of a perfection belonging not to this earth. But this perfection is ours only through hope. The mind is exalted, purified, and ennobled by such contemplations, but the heart is moved only by that which excites compassion for the sinful and sympathy with the suffering.

Declining Art dares, as we have seen, to speak of suffering. Burke calls attention to the fact that in the representation or recital of suffering the human mind experiences a pleasure which no grandeur, no prosperity can effect. This may be,

as he says, because we sympathize with the unfortunate, and "pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure because it arises from love and social affection," such an implanted instinct enabling us to hasten without repugnance to the relief of suffering. This may receive our assent, and yet it is far from satisfying me. Why should thoughts of unhappiness, of pain, of sorrow, fill us with an indescribable, yet, awful, pleasure? I believe it is because we thus obtain a much clearer or more vivid view of the real greatness, the true dignity of our being. No positive pleasure, be it sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, can awaken in us the depth of emotion, the endless questioning, the persistent introspection occasioned by a single thought of pain. Whatever may be the destiny of other existences, that of man centers about suffering: and the artist who succeeds in portraying through the form of the Beautiful his own individual, special ideas and experiences of this great experience which binds the greatest to the least will ever wield a power which is sublime.

The world is drawn to the productions of Declining Art through congeniality or natural affinity. There are thrones and dominions, principalities and powers even on earth. And it is nothing but gross affectation in the many to pretend that they are more in sympathy with the loftiest minds than with those of mediocre power. The greatest works in the world are admired by proxy. Your favorite

author whose explanations you can understand and follow admires them and therefore you believe there is something in them to admire. Through native dulness, indolence, sensual and material inclination, the mass of mankind are excluded from admiration of the greatest works. Emerson tells us that there are never in the world more than a dozen persons who can read and understand Plato. With very little variation this may be said of all of the few great productions which have remained as much in advance of the succeeding ages as they were in advance of the age in which they were produced.

One would think that a vulgar curiosity would tempt the people who all their lives read *about* the masterpieces of Literature to seek at least an occasional opportunity to peep into the mysterious volumes and test for themselves the power of their charm. But no : it is simply a fact that the great mass of English readers are unfamiliar with the works of the first English authors, while they ought not only to have attained this familiarity, but also to be able to read in their own languages the great works of the modern Europeans. If this from the the negligence of preceptors, the importunities of officious friends and the hardships incident to life itself is proved to be impossible, the mastery of *one* foreign language will furnish a key to all methods and modes of translation as an Art in itself, and there are magnificent translations, not

only of the moderns, but of the ancients, which are waiting to be read.

On the other hand, there is no cant greater than that in regard to Literature. The world can never estimate the debt it owes to second class Literature. Yet it is basely afraid to acknowledge that debt; hypocritically desiring to convey the impression that such Literature comes to it in spite of its protest, calling off its attention from the great productions. These are those who intend to excuse themselves from making any mental effort. Knowing that there are all degrees and grades of ability, and recognizing the fact that painful exertion might enable them to produce or perform something creditable, they find their only refuge in berating and maligning the efforts of those who being nearest to them in native endowment are so immeasurably superior to them in character and elevation of thought. But to those who, by dint of every effort, humbly and patiently strive to understand the works of the great masters, every attempt to express a noble thought in permanent forms is sacred. Why should we see through another's eyes, and feel through another's heart? Why not trust our own eyes and our own heart? This false humility is cowardly and degrading. I rejoice in avowing that some of the most cheering, consoling, elevating thoughts, some of the noblest sentiments, some of the purest aspirations of my life have come to me through books and music and pictures of which the

critics know absolutely nothing, or which, if knowing, they have buried beneath the weight of their contempt.

So far from discouraging the continuance of those Arts which have attained their climax and inaugurated their Decline, every effort of every creature who can think and feel should be made to afford them the widest possible sphere of action. When we remember that the History of the world is, after all, as some one has said, only the History of a few great Characters, and when we reflect that we can never know the value of the most ethereal influence which enters into the formation of character, we shall, we must desire the fullest possible expression of all that is in the human soul, waiving of course, as I have said elsewhere, the possibility that genuine Art can ever be enslaved in the service of immorality.

The highest Art addresses itself only to those who, rising superior to the annoyances and vexations of daily life, preserve an imperturbable serenity of spirit; to those who, freed from self-inflicted or superimposed cares and responsibilities, live in an atmosphere of intellectual tranquility. But these, from the pressing necessities of life, the despotism of conventionalism or false ideas of duty, must ever be the few. The many are distressed, burdened, wearied in the race of life. Hence they are creatures of moods. But if, as a keen thinker of our own day tells us,

“’Tis the privilege of Art
Thus to play its cheerful part,
Man in earth to acclimate,
And bend the exile to his fate—”

never will this privilege be more beneficently exercised than when Art condescends to address itself to these moods. Then we have the weird, morbid, lonely, yet passionately inspired landscapes of Ruysdale, of which it is said: “it is impossible to contemplate them and not feel a divine melancholy creep over the soul.” In response to this appeal Gustave Doré deems no image that can be evoked through language beyond the skill and frenzy of the painter’s brush. In obedience to such suggestions the gifted Blake challenges the world to declare whether he is mad or inspired; Haydon, England’s great Historical painter, pleads with the prescience of genius to be permitted to do for England the work that Ary Scheffer, Horace Vernet, Delaroche, David, Lebrun, etc., etc., so magnificently accomplished for France; Chopin sounds and fathoms the capabilities of music to portray the sensitiveness of the most sensitive soul as it struggles with the pain that lifts the heart above all joy, or with the rapture that is scarcely distinguishable from a thrilling pain; and Antoine Wiertz (with a rashness in which I confess I find an inexhaustible charm) defies all the laws of all the Arts in depicting with the utmost extravagance that can be imagined the contrasts and conflicts of human emotion.

Indeed I venture to think that Rubens himself, leading in his train the whole Flemish school, can only be understood by those who experience an excessive ebb and flow of feeling.

From the increasing and conflicting demands of modern civilization (demanding character, will, action from the least and lowest of mankind, in opposition to the old civilization which permitted the many to live an animal existence) the burden of duty must press with heavier force upon every life and, invading the tranquility of the loftiest natures, cause everyone to be, to an extent, the victim of moods. It is this which renders the modern studio a sanctum of intense interest. The plot of life thickens, the divination of the seer progresses, the self-projection of the artist culminates, and at any moment the tourist, the student, or the lover of Art may come upon the work which lays his whole soul bare, the work which speaks to him as he feels it can speak to no other; and in this realm of the Beautiful, in the sphere of avowed consecration to all that is lofty and noble, he, too, though the least worthy, may meet the heart which "though unknown, responds unto his own."

Closer study will reveal this self-justification in each of the provinces of Declining Art. One visit to Versailles will do more to establish the claims of Historical Painting than all the arguments in the world. Of Landscape Painting, Humboldt says: "The grand conceptions which this noble Art as a

more or less inspired branch of the poetry of nature owes to the creative power of the mind, are, like man himself and the imaginative faculties with which he is endowed, independent of place." The portrayal of animal life needs no vindicators since Rosa Bonheur and Edwin Landseer have challenged us to choose between that characterization in which human sympathy represents animal life as it is in its own strength and nobility, and that characterization which shows us animal life in its ideality, its sympathy with human joys and sorrows. The *genre* painting which Louis XIV. once thought beneath his notice has in its exquisite coloring, exactness and truthfulness of detail awakened an interest in the Dutch which all their immortal patriotism might have failed to excite. Had the modern Germans believed the field of sacred Art exhausted we should never have had the lovely Nativities, Ascensions, Annunciations, etc., of Cornelius, Overbeck, Schnorr, Kaulbach and Schadow. And now that we have seen the wonderful Munkacsy's "Christ before Pilate," we know that the solitary artist need not fear, even yet, to test the power of the immortal themes. Munkacsy has, indeed, revealed to us a depth of moral grandeur in the simple, unvarnished Historical Fact of the Gospel story which outweighs the devotional element in the Italian works and the tragic interest of the Flemish and Dutch Schools.

But by a paradox which may not be apparent to

us at first, only those who have made a patient and sincere study of the principles of Pure Art can perceive the true justification in Declining Art. There is something so noble, so generous in true admiration that we ought to begin to suspect the reality of any praise which involves the disparagement of something unlike the object praised. Taste may strike deeper roots into character than we have as yet believed. Its enlargement may involve that of the mind, the heart, the soul itself. The acknowledgment of one unchangeable, inflexible standard of perfection does not hinder, but furthers the recognition of each special manifestation of that perfection. In cultivating universality of taste upon this true and only foundation, happy is the person who realizes that he is allied to that which he admires, and then has reason to rejoice in all that excites his own special admiration : or, in words of more than human wisdom, "Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."





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